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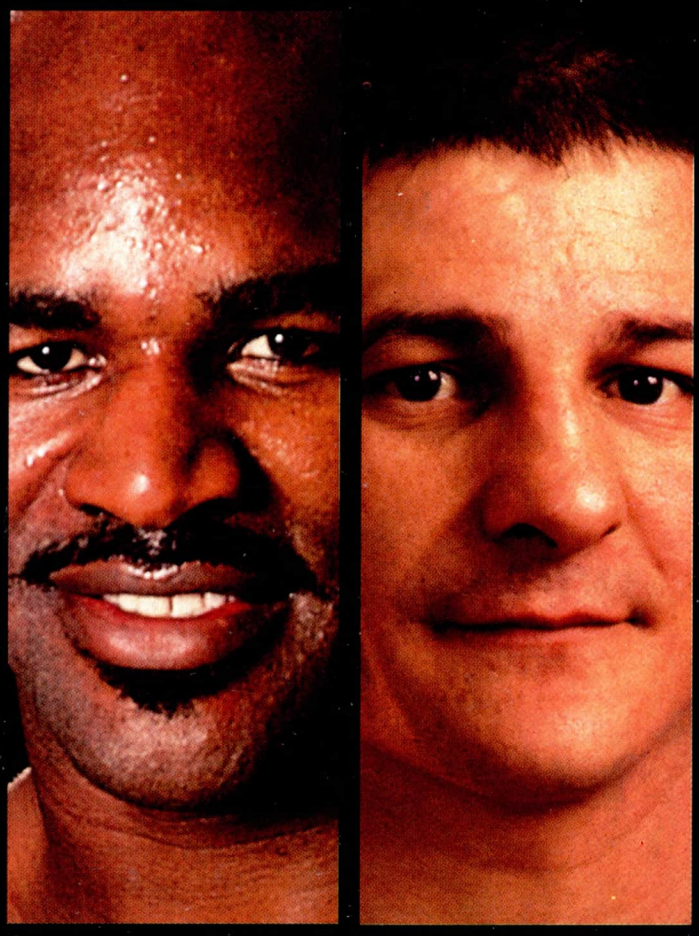

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CRUISERWEIGHT Ch: James Toney 1-Nate Miller 2-Alexander Gurov 3-Robert Daniels 4-Juan C. Gomez 5-Johnny Nelson 6-Ralf Rocchigiani 7-Uriah Grant 8-Adolfo Washington 9-Darren Corbett 10-Stefan Angherm

LT. HEAVYWEIGHT Ch: Drake Thadzi 1-Virgil Hill 2-Montell Griffin 3-Mike McCallum 4-Ole Klemetsen 5-Eddy Smulders 6-Merqui Sosa 7-Frank Tate 8-Mohamed Siluvangi 9-Michael Nunn 10-Thomas Hearns

SP. MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Mads Larsen 1-Robin Reid 2-Henry Wharton 3-Vincenzo Nardiello 4-Roberto Duran 5-Jorge Castro 6-Dean Francis 7-Frederic Seiller 8-Herol Graham 9-Vinny Pazienza 10-Chris Eubank

MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Freeman Barr 1-Willie Joppy 2-Silvio Branco 3-Julio Cesar Vasquez 4-Paul Vaden 5-Hassine Cherifi 6-Brian Barbosa 7-Dana Rosenblatt 8-John David Jackson 9-Andrew Council 10-DarrenMaciunski

LT. MIDDLEWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Raul Marquez 2-Terry Norris 3-Verno Phillips 4-Julian Jackson 5-Javier Castillejo 6-Bronco McKart 7-Tony Marshall 8-Gianfranco Rossi 9-Troy Waters 10-David Ciarlante

WELTERWEIGHT Ch: Jose Rivera 1-Pernell Whitaker 2-Julio Cesar Chavez 3-Jose Luis Lopez 4-Oba Carr 5-Patrick Charpentier 6-Alessandro Duran 7-Hector Camacho 8-Larry Barnes 9-Peter Malinga 10-Shannan Taylor

LT. WELTERWEIGHT Ch: Johar Lashin 1-Frankie Randell 2-Juan Martin Coggi 3-Miquel A. Gonzalez 4-Kostya Tszyu 5-Soren Sondergaard 6-Michey Ward 7-Alfonso Sanchez 8-Charles Murray 9-Rafael Ruelas 10-Carlos Gonzalez

LIGHTWEIGHT Ch: Tony Pep 1-Juan Molina 2-George Scott 3-Phillip Holiday 4- Alberto Sicurella 5-David O Tetten 6-Billy Irwin 7-Levander Johnson 8-Edward B. Morales 9-Carlos Fernandez 10-Israel Cardona

SP. FEATHERWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Azumah Nelson 2-Arturo Gatti 3-Tom Johnson 4-Gabriel Ruelas 5-Orlando Canizales 6-Tracy Patterson 7-Angel Manfreddy 8-Julien Lorcy 9-Anatoly Alexandrov 10-Derrick Gainer

FEATHERWEIGHT Ch: Radford Beasley 1-Kevin Kelly 2-Billy Hardy 3-Steve Robinson 4-Claudio V. Martinet 5-Manuel Medina 6-Cesar Soto 7-Juan Man Marquez 8-Hector Acero-Sanchez 9-Carlos A. Rios 10-Mehdi Labduoni

SP. BANTAMWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Junior Jones 2-Daniel Zaragoza 3-Marco A. Barrera 4-Danny Romero 5-Jesus Salud 6-Casius Baloyi 7-Wayne McCullough 8-Rafael Del Valle 9-Spencer Oliver 10-Lehio Ledwaba

BANTAMWEIGHT Ch: Johnny Bredahl 1-Daorung Siriwat 2-Paul Ayala 3-Mbulelo Botile 4-Sirimongkol Singmanassak 5-Cuautemoc Gomez 6-Dario Azuaga 7-Victor Rabanales 8-Oscar Garro 9-Sergio Millan 10-Lakhin CP-Gym

SP. FLYWEIGHT Ch: Vacant 1-Hirosni Kawashima 2-Samson Dutchboy Gym 3-Yokthai Sith Oar 4-Oscar Archinega 5-Alberto Jimenez 6-Hugo Soto 7-Luigi Castiglione 8-Adonis Cruz 9-Suvatchai Chalermri 10-Hiroki Ioka

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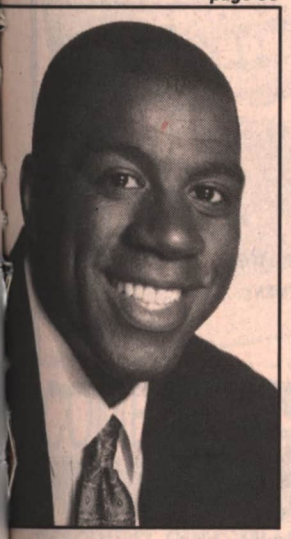

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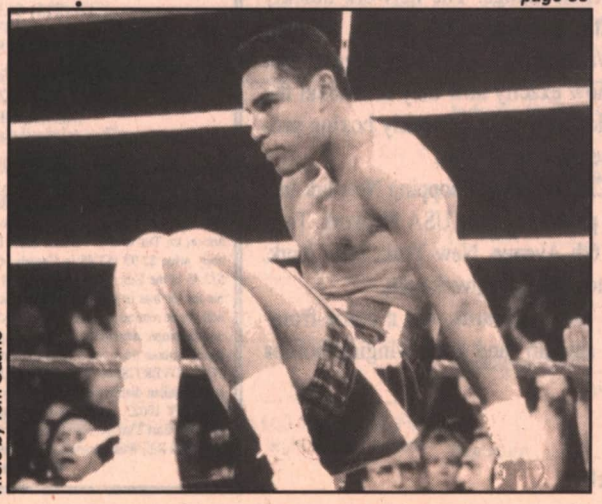

Photo by Tom Casino

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Photo by Brent Cook

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RINGSIDE

At approximately 11:01 p.m. (eastern time) on August 25, 1998, an execution is scheduled to take place that will have a profound effect on boxing. The victim will be an old friend, a member of the fistic family whose faithful service to the Sweet Science has been a reassuring presence for almost two decades. You see, on the last Tuesday of August the USA Network is going to kill the *Tuesday Night Fights*.

That's right, the corporate geniuses at USA have decided to literally pull the plug on its popular, long-running boxing series. Not because of low ratings, mind you—*Tuesday Night Fights* still does very respectable numbers—but because the network wants to "go in a different direction." It seems that USA feels it has outgrown one of the programing staples responsible for its success. Apparently, boxing's demographics are not compatible with the younger, upscale audience USA is lusting after, and is therefore considered expendable.

USA's decision to drop boxing is a monumental blow to the sport, the ramifications of which will be felt throughout the industry. Most obvious is the loss of the 42 shows that USA normally telecasts during a 12-month period. Since there are usually at least three bouts per show, that's 126 fewer TV fights a year, a staggering deficit that will wreck havoc on both the financial structure of the sport and its ability to develop new talent.

Even the lowest paid fighters receive between $7,500 and $10,000 for boxing a main event on the *Tuesday Night Fights*. Without TV money, the fighters would be lucky to get $2,500 for the same fight. And the fighters won't be the only ones taking a sizable pay cut. Without USA pumping millions into the game, promoters who previously counted on the network's dollars will run fewer cards, and some will go out of business altogether.

But the financial aspect of the situation is only half of the equation. Perhaps of even greater importance in the long run will be the loss of exposure for the sport in general and up-and-coming fighters in particular. I could fill this column with the names of the outstanding fighters who got their first national exposure on *Tuesday Night Fights*. And it would take an entire issue to do full justice to all the memorable moments the program has provided during the 17 years fight fans have been welcoming it into their living rooms. But instead of throwing in the towel and bemoaning the loss of another of boxing's great traditions, it's time to launch a blistering counter attack.

During the first two months of the 1996 season, USA experimented with cutting back *Tuesday Night Fights* from two hours to 60 minutes. The result was a hue and cry from loyal viewers and an immediate dropoff in ratings. The network quickly returned to the tried and true two-hour format. It's a longshot, but maybe another, even more vociferous protest can save *Tuesday Night Fights*. I strongly suggest that every reader immediately let the USA Network know exactly how they feel about the imminent cancellation of what has been boxing's longest-running weekly boxing program since the old *Friday Night Fights* went off the air in the 1960s.

Grievances should be addressed to Barry Diller, CEO of Home Shopping Network Inc. (which own the USA Network), and Kay Koplovitz, president of the USA Network. They can be reached by writing to USA Network, 1230 6th Avenue, New York, New York, 10020; calling (212) 408-9100; or sending an e-mail to tnf@usanetwork.com.

Right now, boxing fans are trailing badly on the scorecards, but a come-from-behind knockout is still possible if we come out smokin' and keep winging bombs until the final bell.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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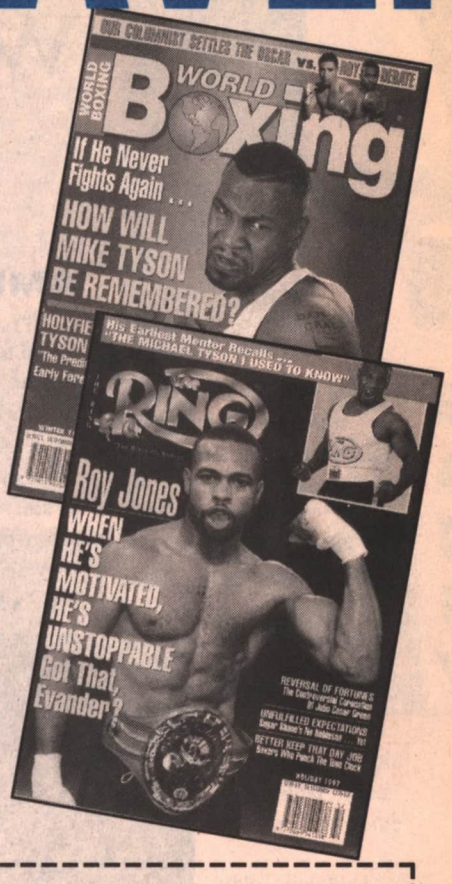

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COME OUT WRITING

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AMERICAN CHICKEN LITTLES?

Hey, what is it with you Americans? It must be a sad day when America's top heavyweights run scared from a British heavyweight. What's the problem with your big boys? Don't they fancy their chances with a British heavy, unless his name is Frank Bruno? The days of the "Horizontal British Heavyweights" are far from over, but now that we've finally found one who can fight back, what happens? First, "Chicken" Bowe trashes his belt rather than face Lennox Lewis. (Something to do with Lennox chinning him in the Olympics, perhaps?) Then "The Holy Warrior," supposedly eager to unify the titles, wants to face a guy he's beaten twice already—a certain Mr. Tyson (Money before pride, Evander?), rather than face our guy.

When ducked by Riddick Bowe, Lewis destroyed the man no one else wanted any part of—Razor Ruddock—in two rounds. Now Holyfield is trying to duck him. Lewis destroyed the man who retired Bowe, Andrew Golota, in one round. Shame on you, Americans. Who would have thought that you would be afraid of a poor British heavyweight?

JOE FEDERICO
London, England

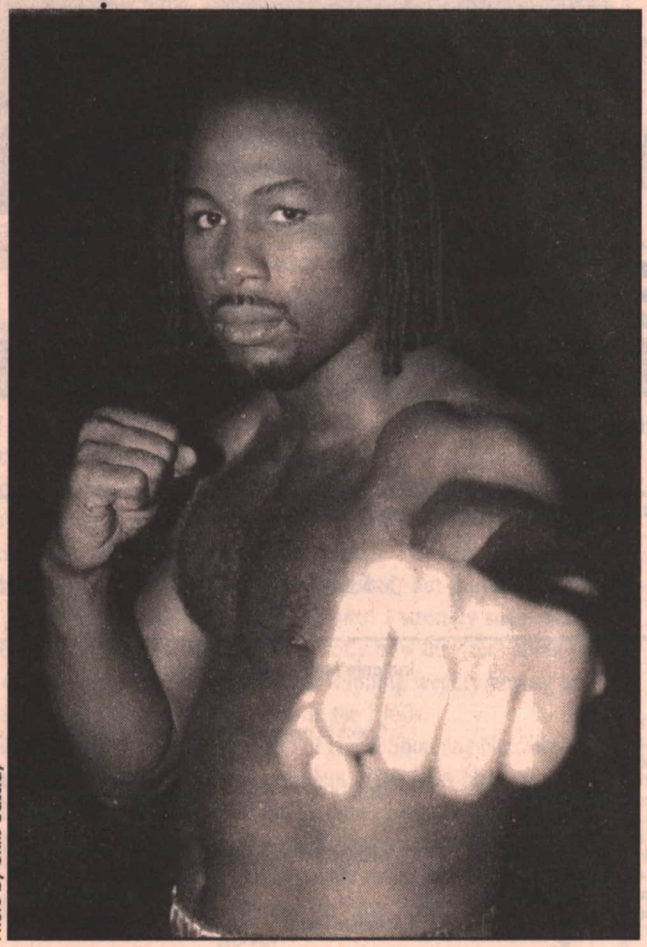


Photo by Chris Cassidy

What happens when England finally gets a heavyweight champion, like Lennox Lewis, who fights back? All of the top American heavyweights run and hide, according to reader Joe Federico.

POUND-FOR-POUND PROTEST

I am really upset at THE RING's latest pound-for-pound rankings. How do Pernell Whitaker, an up-and-down fighter of late, and Felix Trinidad, still only a well-skilled prospect, finish ahead of Evander Holyfield?

Then you have Roy Jones, who has the talent to be number one, but fights every four years. I have no problem with Oscar De La Hoya being number one, but if he keeps moving up in weight, he will run into his first roadblock in Bernard Hopkins. If you are going to rank Trinidad strictly for his talents, then I believe Hopkins and Ricardo Lopez should be numbers three and four.

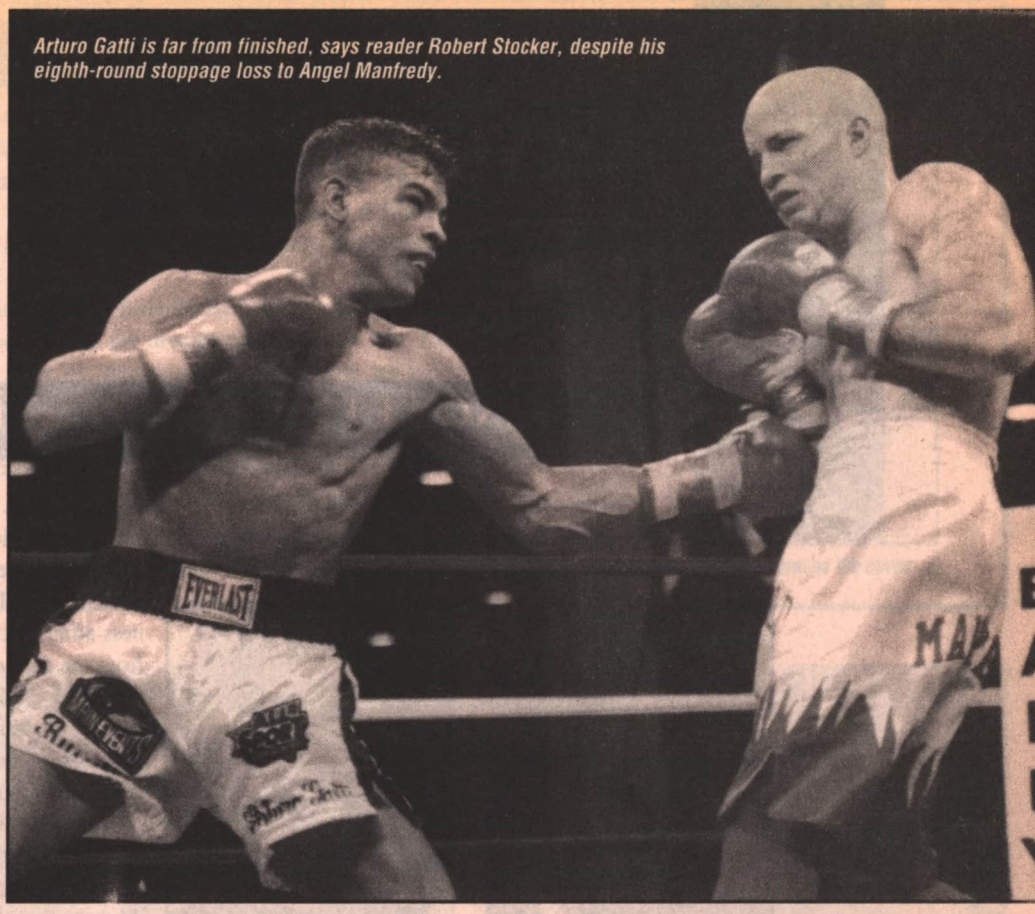
Please rank fighters on what they have proven of late, and not what you or I think they are going to prove. This is not a division of prospects such as Trinidad and Quartey, but a list of the all-around best.

JOE SCALISI
Toronto, Ontario

NO MAS HYSTERIA

I am writing in defense of Roberto Duran. His "No Mas" surrender took place when I was in grade school, yet it seems I can't open a boxing magazine without reading at least one reference to it. When Tyson bit Holyfield's ear, it was compared in shock value to (gasp!) a gifted boxer admitting defeat to one of the greatest pound-for-pound boxers in any era, Sugar Ray Leonard. If Duran is mentioned in an article, his great victories before and after Leonard-Duran II are rarely discussed, but there is always a No Mas joke. Regardless of what you might think of Duran, or how he acted that fateful night, it's time to drop it. Please, no mas on "No Mas."

ZAC HANSCOM
San Diego, CA



Arturo Gatti is far from finished, says reader Robert Stocker, despite his eighth-round stoppage loss to Angel Manfredy.

THUNDER WILL RETURN

In the aftermath of the Angel Manfredy-Arturo Gatti bout, the "I told you so" crowd was in full swing. Boxing experts (especially the ultra-annoying Larry Merchant) were patting themselves on the back after predicting Gatti's lack of defense and slugfest mentality would lead to his downfall. Now, many say this is the end of the line for "Thunder."

I strongly disagree. Manfredy fought a smart fight and landed a vicious hook that would have knocked out any lightweight on the planet. Gatti was able to get off the canvas and press the action throughout the fight, despite a gash over his eye.

Because boxing fans love Gatti's rock 'em-sock 'em style and the fact that he has taken on top-notch competition during his 130-pound reign, I feel he deserves a title shot at 135 very soon. Arturo was able to defeat Wilson Rodriguez, Tracy Patterson, Gabe Ruelas, and Calvin Grove, a virtual who's who of junior lightweights, before losing to "El Diablo." I think Gatti would dismantle WBC lightweight champion Steve Johnston or IBF lightweight champ Shane Mosley, or whoever else wants to give him a title shot at 135. Something tells me boxing fans have not heard the last of Thunder.

ROBERT STOCKER
Virgnia Beach, VA

GIVE OSCAR HIS DUE

It is time to give Oscar De La Hoya his due respect. He is only 25 years old and has already won world title belts at three different weights. He's beaten two boxing legends in Julio Cesar Chavez and Pernell Whitaker. There seem to be a few people who think Oscar is still just hype. I think they are blind or jealous. Oscar is the most dedicated and classy boxer to come around in a long time.

I really hope he stays at welterweight for 1999—it is his best weight. In '99, I would like to see him fight Oba Carr, Ike Quartey, and Jose Luis Lopez (Lopez will be the toughest of the three). He should face Felix Trinidad at 154 and claim his fourth world title by knockout in dramatic fashion. Then he should retire. In the end, boxing will need Oscar more than Oscar needs boxing.

STEVE SKINNER
Lake Forest, CA

ROY'S HEAVYWEIGHT MATCH

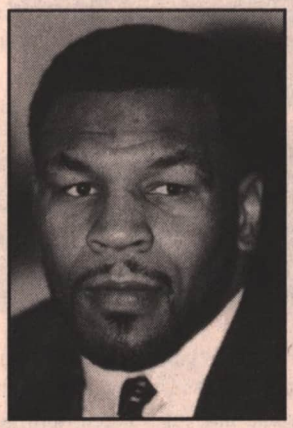
Roy Jones is looking for worthy fighters to fight for the right money. He wants to move to heavyweight, but would rather start out looking for a smallish heavyweight. I think he should seek out Jeremy Williams. He's a relatively small heavyweight, about the same size as Roy. He, too, came up from a lighter weight class. He is quick and can box very well, I might add. Williams has good power in both hands. He does have a suspect chin, but that's been against heavyweights. Roy is not a legitimate heavyweight. On the other hand, would Roy be able to take a punch from Williams? It's all very intriguing.

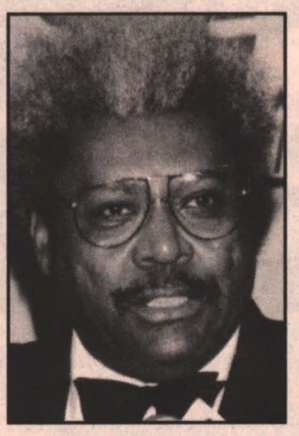
DON ROBERTS
Jacksonville, FL ■

ROUND ONE

KING GETS THE BOOT AND THE SUIT

The perpetual rumors of Mike Tyson intending to part ways with promoter Don King finally became fact on March 5 when Tyson, with the help of Evander Holyfield's former manager, Shelly Finkel, filed a $100-million lawsuit against King. The complaint essentially accused King of taking advantage of Tyson's ignorance regarding business affairs, skimming tens of millions of dollars from the former heavyweight champ over a 10-year period. The suit alleges that King "knew that Tyson had a fundamental inability to read and understand contracts and fully appreciate the effect of business transactions on his life."





Tyson sued King for $100-million, ending 10-year business relationship

Tyson also reportedly discharged co-managers John Horne and Rory Holloway, and it was speculated that Finkel would replace them. At press time, however, no such partnership had been announced. "Mike has not asked me to be his manager," Finkel said, "but if he did, I would accept."

HOLYFIELD: THE NEXT GENERATION

William Holyfield has stressed that having his own identity has always been important to him. Unfortunately, it will probably take a long time before the 25-year-old light heavyweight is known as anything more than the fighter who calls the WBA/IBF heavyweight champion "Uncle Evander."

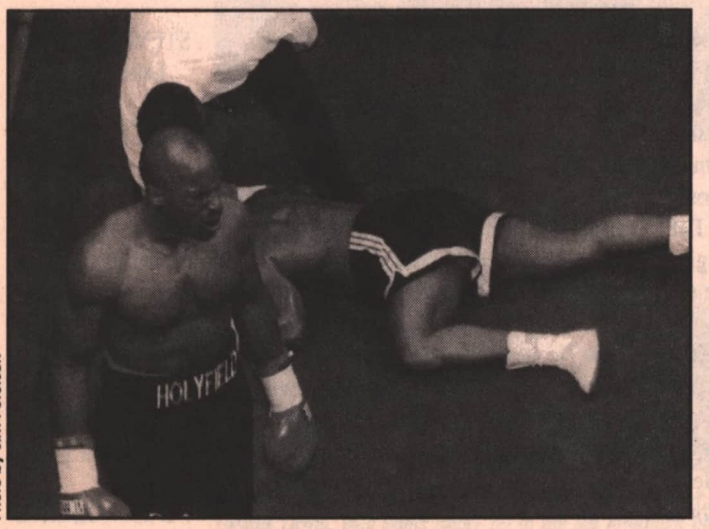


Photo by Jim Peterson

Nephew William: Smashing debut

William is off to a great start in his quest to escape "The Real Deal's" sizable shadow, as it took him just 20 seconds to kayo Cincinnati's Leon Shaver in his pro debut on January 31. Fighting before a friendly crowd in Des Moines, Iowa, a large percentage of which was on hand for a special presentation honoring his uncle, the younger Holyfield didn't take long to live up to his billing. In fact, he is on a pace superior to that of Evander, who started his pro career by winning a six-round decision in 1984.

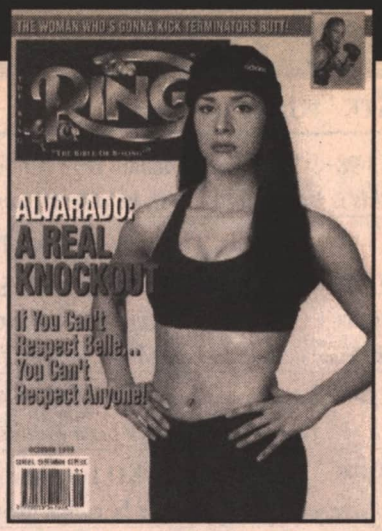
The rookie Holyfield not only is blessed with world-class genes, but also travels frequently with Uncle Evander's camp, absorbing the wisdom and skills to make it in the pro game. Still, while his ability may one day speak for itself, it doesn't hurt to be able to cash in on the name recognition in the meantime.

—Eric Raskin

GLOVED GALS HIT THE SILVER SCREEN

Just how popular has women's boxing become? Sure, all-women's cards take place fairly frequently, and the likes of Christy Martin and Lucia Rijker are routinely featured on pay-per-view undercards, but can we say that the fighting females are actually a part of the mainstream consciousness? It finally seems we can, as *Knockout*, a feature film about a lady boxer, began production in February.

Sophia Adella Hernandez stars as Isabelle Alvarado, a talented Latino boxer from East Los Angeles who pursues the dreams of her father, who had given up his own boxing career to raise his family. The fight scenes are being choreographed by Jimmy Gambina, who is best known for his work in *Raging Bull* and the *Rocky* series. The film also stars Paul Winfield and Maria Conchita Alonso, and features a prop version of THE RING with Hernandez on the cover. *Knockout* is being marketed as "the female *Rocky*," and though nobody's guaranteeing a Best Picture Oscar just yet, the current popularity of women's boxing could make it a box office success.



***Knockout*: Hernandez graces the cover**

PADDY DeMARCO, 1928-1997

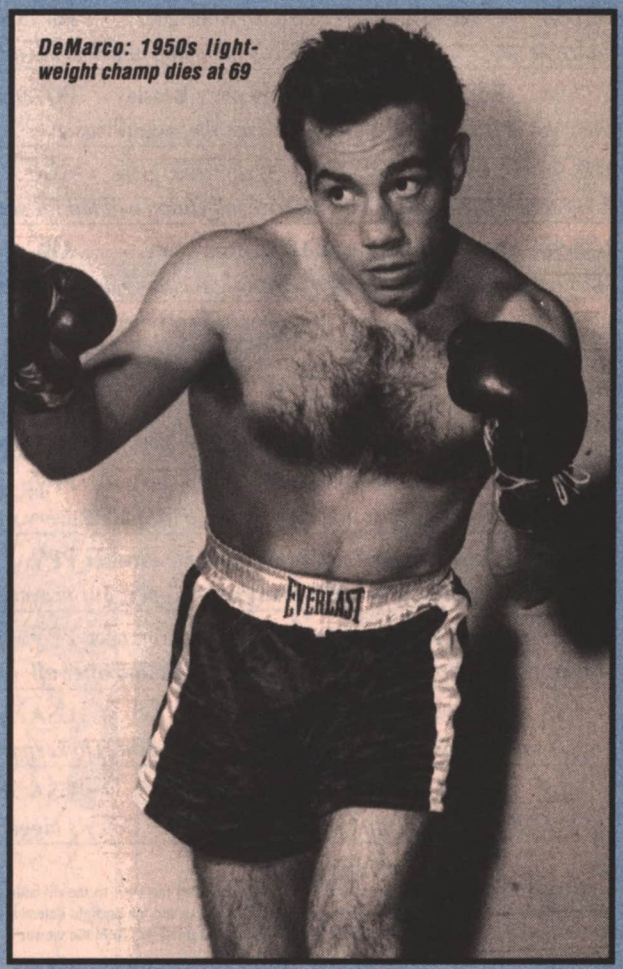
Despite enduring a career filled with snubs, questionable decisions, and general disrespect, Paddy DeMarco made good on the only world title shot he ever received, upsetting Jimmy Carter for the lightweight crown in 1954. Though his reign would last only eight months, DeMarco's time as champion served to validate a career plagued by adversity.

Born Pasquale Joseph DeMarco, the Brooklyn-based fighter spent years campaigning for a crack at the title, only to see less-deserving, relatively unproven challengers granted shots at Carter. Winning two of three against Hall of Famer Sandy Saddler, as well as decisioning top welterweight Billy Graham, were not enough to secure a title match for DeMarco, whose reputation as a rough, at times dirty, often dull fighter, carried more weight than his fine record. Promises of title shots were repeatedly broken, until finally, on March 5, 1954, DeMarco's wish was granted.

Even after scoring the convincing 15-round unanimous decision over Carter, DeMarco entered as a 3-1 underdog for the rematch. DeMarco surrendered the title when he was unable to answer the bell for the 15th round, and never received another title shot before his retirement in 1959.

Long suffering from Alzheimer's disease, DeMarco died of pneumonia on December 22. Though not an exceptional puncher, as evidenced by his astonishingly low total of just eight knockouts over the course of his 75-26-3 career, DeMarco was known as a wily, determined scrapper with tremendous heart. And despite all the negative forces that stood in his way, DeMarco's name will forever be accompanied by the phrase "world lightweight champion."

—Eric Raskin



DeMarco: 1950s lightweight champ dies at 69

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
2-13-98	**Laurent Boudouani D 12 Guillermo Jones**	**Show**	**WBA jm**	**B**	**A-**	**B**
	If this is Boudouani's best, he'd better hope De La Hoya, Trinidad stay at 147					
2-13-98	**Johnny Tapia W 12 Rodolfo Blanco**	**Show**	**IBF jb**	**A-**	**C**	**C+**
	It's time for Tapia to fight Mark Johnson or move up to 118					
2-20-98	Jake Matlala Tech. Win 8 Victor Burgos	ESPN2	jfl	B	A	B
	Baby Jake gets all he can handle; he may finally be slowing down					
2-21-98	Marco Antonio Barrera KO 5 Angel Rosario	FOXSN	jf	B+	C	C+
	Welcome back, Marco. We've been waiting					
2-22-98	**Mark Johnson KO 1 Arthur Johnson**	**ESPN**	**IBF fl**	**A**	**A-**	**B+**
	Did someone say this would be competitive?					
2-23-98	Ed Mahone KO 10 Cody Koch	FOXSN	h	C-	B+	B
	Prospect Mahone comes through late against former tough man competitor					
2-23-98	Bridgett Riley W 10 Yvonne Trevino	ESPN2	jf	C	B	C
	Riley squeaks by in sport network's first all-women's card					
2-24-98	Obed Sullivan KO 7 Keith McKnight	USA	h	B-	C+	C-
	Sullivan will have to do better to convince us he's above second-tier					
2-27-98	Adan Vargas W 12 Narciso Rodriguez	FOXSN	b	A	B+	A
	Rodriguez does well early, but Vargas' non-stop attack is the difference					
2-27-98	Robert McCracken W 10 Lonny Beasley	FOXSN	m	C	B-	B
	Undefeated Brit plods to points win over shopworn Beasley					
2-28-98	Lamon Brewster KO 1 Artis Pendergrass	ABC	h	B-	C	C+
	Brewster looks like the goods; better competition will tell for sure					
2-28-98	**Stevie Johnston W 12 George Scott**	**ABC**	**WBC l**	**A**	**A-**	**B+**
	"Li'l But Bad" may not be best lightweight champ, but he sure is fun to watch					
3-3-98	Ken Bowman W 12 Merqui Sosa	USA	lh	C+	A-	B+
	May be the end of the line for veteran Sosa; unknown Bowman impressive					
3-3-98	David Reid W 8 Fidel Avendano	USA	jm	B+	A	B
	Hey, Coach Mitchell, how about an easy one? Avendano tough squared					
3-7-98	Gabriel Mira W 12 Young Soon Chang	PPV	fl	B+	B-	B+
	Who knew Mira could box and move? Chang befuddled every step of the way					
3-7-98	**Ricardo Lopez Tech. Draw 7 Rosendo Alvarez**	**PPV**	**WBA/WBC s**	**A**	**A+**	**A-**
	We wanted someone who could really push Lopez; our prayers have been answered					
3-7-98	**Julio Cesar Chavez D 12 Miguel Angel Gonzalez**	**PPV**	**WBC jw**	**A**	**A+**	**B**
	Maybe J.C. Superstar has a fight or two left in him after all					
3-10-98	David Tua W 10 Jeff Wooden	USA	h	B-	A-	B
	Always tough, Wooden survives some hellacious shots to keep it close					
3-10-98	Derrell Coley W 12 Willy Wise	USA	w	B	B+	C
	"Slick Willy" not quite slick enough to overcome Coley's bigger guns					

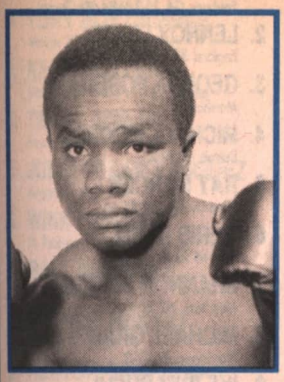
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime

HOGAN "KID" BASSEY, 1932-1998



Bassey: First Nigerian champ

On June 24, 1957, history was made in Paris when Hogan "Kid" Bassey became Nigeria's first world champion. After winning "eliminator" bouts against Percy Lewis and Miguel Berrios—just 25 days apart—Bassey was matched against Cherif Hamia for the vacant featherweight title, and came through in spectacular fashion, rising from the canvas in the second to score a 10th-round stoppage.

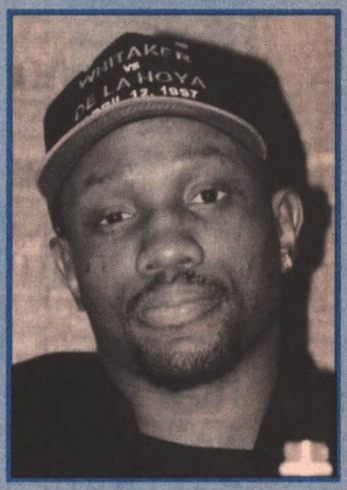
Although Bassey, whose real name was Okon Bassey Asuquo, made only one successful defense and lost the title in March of 1959 to Davey Moore, he retired with an impressive record of 59-13-2 (21). Though some would say his retirement at the age of 27 was premature, Bassey did perhaps the hardest thing for a boxer to do: He walked away from the game while he was still a contender. His final fight was the rematch with Moore, and the 11th-round kayo loss was all the reason he needed to quit before he risked tarnishing his fine career.

Bassey's death on January 26 in Lagos, Nigeria, received little fanfare in America, but the featherweight champion's passing didn't go unnoticed in England, where he fought 53 times. Bassey was a hero to his countrymen and one of boxing's true class acts in the 1950s.

—Eric Raskin

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Four-division former champion **Pernell Whitaker** announced on March 5 that he had elected to enter rehab after failing a drug test the previous week. Whitaker was preparing for an April 25 WBA welterweight title challenge against **Ike Quartey**, and the fight, which was officially postponed and effectively canceled, was already in trouble due to Whitaker's positive cocaine test last October. The WBA lifted "Sweet Pea's" initial suspension on February 16, citing improper testing procedures, but Whitaker's concession to submit to random drug testing for six months proved to be his undoing ... Referee **Mills Lane** will be banging a gavel to his trademark "Let's get it on!" when his syndicated television series, *Judge Mills Lane: Justice You Can Trust*, debuts in September. The show will be similar in format to *The People's Court*, and Lane, who has been a district court judge in Reno, Nevada, since 1991, doesn't expect it to interfere with his refereeing schedule.



Whitaker: Enters rehab

THE PUNCHLINES

"His age and his health are not pluses for him, and his organization is in complete disarray. Carl King, his son, couldn't run a parking lot."

—Erstwhile Don King publicist Michael Marley on the current state of his former employer's company.

"All my downfalls with the women, the nightlife, the drugs, the bad habits; I didn't take my career seriously. I wasted my talent, that's why I'm on his butt. If he keeps his head on and listens to his daddy, he's the next Sugar Leonard."

—Floyd Mayweather Sr., freshly out of jail, explaining how he hopes his son, undefeated Floyd Jr., will benefit from his father's mistakes.

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended March 26, 1998

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

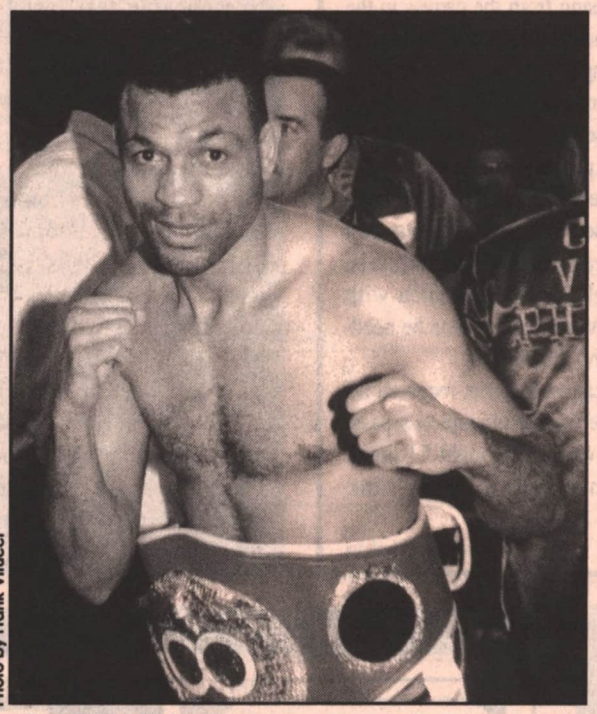


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Vince Phillips held onto the top spot among junior welterweights by stopping Alfonso Sanchez in the first round

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** — Fairburn, GA *35-3 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** — England *32-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **GEORGE FOREMAN** — Marshall, TX *76-5*
4. **MICHAEL MOORER** — Detroit, MI *39-2*
5. **RAY MERCER** — West Orange, NJ *25-4-1*
6. **CHRIS BYRD** — Flint, MI *23-0*
7. **SHANNON BRIGGS** — New York, NY *31-1*
8. **MICHAEL GRANT** — Norristown, PA *27-0*
9. **IKE IBEABUCHI** — Dallas, TX *17-0*
10. **DAVID TUA** — Totowa, NJ *29-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **FABRICE TIOZZO** — France *38-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** — Germany *22-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **IMAMU MAYFIELD** — New Brunswick, NJ *17-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** — Argentina *22-2-1*
5. **NATE MILLER** — Philadelphia, PA *30-5*
6. **CARL THOMPSON** — England *22-4*
7. **ROBERT DANIELS** — Miami, FL *35-3-1*
8. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS** — Las Vegas, NV *28-4-1*
9. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON** — Lexington, KY *26-5-2*
10. **DON DIEGO POEDER** — Netherlands *21-0*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** — Pensacola, FL *35-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** — Germany *38-0*
3. **REGGIE JOHNSON** — Houston, TX *37-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **VIRGIL HILL** — Bismarck, ND *43-2*
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** — Chicago, IL *29-1*
6. **LOU DEL VALLE** — Bronx, NY *27-1 (WBA Champ)*
7. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI** — Germany *40-4-1 (WBC Interim Champ)*
8. **WILLIAM GUTHRIE** — Philadelphia, PA *24-1*
9. **MICHAEL NUNN** — Davenport, IA *52-4*
10. **KEN BOWMAN** — Chicago, IL *29-0*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **FRANKIE LILES** — N. Hollywood, CA *31-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **CHARLES BREWER** — Philadelphia, PA *30-5 (IBF Champ)*
3. **SUGARBOY MALINGA** — South Africa *42-10 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JOE CALZAGHE** — Wales *24-0*
5. **ROBIN REID** — England *25-1-1*
6. **HEROL GRAHAM** — England *48-5*
7. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO** — Italy *33-6*
8. **THOMAS TATE** — Houston, TX *33-5*
9. **CHRIS EUBANK** — England *45-3-2*
10. **JOSEPH KIWANUKA** — Las Vegas, NV *25-2-2*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** — Philadelphia, PA *34-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **KEITH HOLMES** — Washington, D.C. *30-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY** — Washington, D.C. *25-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **OTIS GRANT** — Canada *30-1-1*
5. **LONNIE BRADLEY** — New York, NY *26-0-1*
6. **JULIO CESAR GREEN** — Brooklyn, NY *22-3*
7. **ROBERT McCRACKEN** — England *31-0*
8. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** — Davenport, IA *19-2-1*
9. **HASSINE CHERIFI** — France *24-2-1*
10. **RYAN RHODES** — England *16-1*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI** — France 36-2-1 (WBA Champ)
2. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** — Mexico 70-2 (IBF Champ)
3. **KEITH MULLINGS** — Brooklyn, NY 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **TERRY NORRIS** — Mission Valley, CA 47-7
5. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ** — Argentina 60-3
6. **WINKY WRIGHT** — St. Petersburg, FL 38-1
7. **RAUL MARQUEZ** — Houston, TX 28-1
8. **BRONCO McKART** — Monroe, MI 34-2
9. **HECTOR CAMACHO** — Orlando, FL 64-4-1
10. **EMMETT LINTON** — Tacoma, WA 24-2

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** — Whittier, CA 27-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **PERNELL WHITAKER** — Norfolk, VA 41-2-1
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD** — Puerto Rico 32-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **IKE QUARTEY** — Ghana 34-0-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ** — Mexico 40-3-2
6. **OBA CARR** — Detroit, MI 44-2-1
7. **PATRICK CHARPENTIER** — France 26-4-1
8. **VERNON FORREST** — Atlanta, GA 23-0
9. **WILFREDO RIVERA** — Puerto Rico 27-3-1
10. **ANDREI PESTRIAEV** — Russia 20-2

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **VINCE PHILLIPS** — Las Vegas, NV 39-3 (IBF Champ)
2. **KHALID RAHILOU** — France 32-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ** — Mexico 99-2-2
4. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ** — Mexico 42-1-1
5. **KOSTYA TSZYU** — Australia 19-1-1
6. **RAFAEL RUELAS** — Studio City, CA 50-3
7. **HECTOR LOPEZ** — Palmdale, CA 38-6-1
8. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA** — Puerto Rico 46-4
9. **REGGIE GREEN** — Clinton, MD 27-2
10. **GIOVANNI PARISI** — Italy 36-2-1

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV** — Japan 25-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY** — Pomona, CA 26-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **STEVE JOHNSTON** — Denver, CO 24-0 (WBC Champ)
4. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY** — South Africa 31-1
5. **ARTURO GATTI** — Jersey City, NJ 29-2
6. **ISRAEL CARDONA** — Hartford, CT 28-2
7. **AZUMAH NELSON** — Ghana 39-4-2
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIJAN** — Uzbekistan 23-0
9. **CESAR BAZAN** — Mexico 30-2-1
10. **JAMES LEIJA** — San Antonio, TX 35-3-2

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **GENARO HERNANDEZ** — Los Angeles, CA 37-1-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY** — Gary, IN 23-2-1
3. **YONG SOO CHOI** — South Korea 23-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA** — Oxnard, CA 30-0 (IBF Champ)
5. **JULIEN LORCY** — France 38-0-2
6. **TRACY PATTERSON** — Highland, NY 60-5-1
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ** — Austin, TX 22-1
8. **GABE RUELAS** — Arleta, CA 44-4
9. **ARNULFO CASTILLO** — Mexico 26-0-2
10. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** — Grand Rapids, MI 15-0

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED** — England 29-0
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA** — Philippines 42-7 (WBC Champ)
3. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ** — Puerto Rico 50-7-3
4. **HECTOR LIZARRAGA** — Fresno, CA 34-8-5 (IBF Champ)
5. **KEVIN KELLEY** — Flushing, NY 47-2-2
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** — Mexico 24-1
7. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ** — Hartford, CT 15-0
8. **DERRICK GAINER** — Pensacola, FL 21-4
9. **ORLANDO CANIZALES** — Laredo, TX 46-3-1
10. **ANTONIO CERMENO** — Venezuela 29-1

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **VUYANI BUNGU** — South Africa 34-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **ERIK MORALES** — Mexico 28-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **KENNEDY McKINNEY** — Memphis, TN 33-3-1
4. **JUNIOR JONES** — Brooklyn, NY 44-3
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** — Mexico 44-2
6. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH** — Las Vegas, NV 20-1
7. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** — Mexico 24-0 (WBA Champ)
8. **MBULELO BOTILE** — South Africa 22-1
9. **RAFAEL DEL VALLE** — Puerto Rico 23-2-1
10. **HECTOR ACERO-SANCHEZ** — Brooklyn, NY 37-5-3

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** — Cincinnati, OH 17-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **NANA KONADU** — Ghana 38-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI** — Japan 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSUK** — Thailand 16-1
5. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** — Colombia 37-1
6. **PAULIE AYALA** — Ft. Worth, TX 23-0
7. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM** — Thailand 14-1
8. **DAORUNG C. SIRIWAT** — Thailand 61-6-3
9. **ADAN VARGAS** — Mexico 26-1-1
10. **DARIO AZUAGA** — Paraguay 41-0-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **JOHNNY TAPIA** — Albuquerque, NM 43-0-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **GERRY PENALOSA** — Philippines 39-1-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **SATOSHI IIDA** — Japan 23-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR** — Thailand 14-1-1
5. **HYUNG CHUL LEE** — South Korea 19-6
6. **HAROLD GREY** — Colombia 21-2
7. **LUIS BOLANO** — Colombia 23-0
8. **RATANACHAI DUTCHBOY GYM** — Thailand 25-3
9. **JULIO GAMBOA** — Nicaragua 21-2
10. **JOEL LUNA ZARATE** — Mexico 32-2-1

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON** — Washington, D.C. 34-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM** — Thailand 32-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **JOSE BONILLA** — Venezuela 24-3 (WBA Champ)
4. **CARLOS SALAZAR** — Argentina 47-7-3
5. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT** — Thailand 28-1
6. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL** — Mexico 36-3
7. **DAVID GUERAULT** — France 12-0
8. **CHOKVIWAT CHOKCHAI** — Thailand 30-3
9. **JESPER JENSEN** — Denmark 26-1
10. **ARTHUR JOHNSON** — East St. Louis, IL 17-4

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG** — Thailand 38-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **PHICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT** — Thailand 19-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **MAURICIO PASTRANA** — Colombia 17-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **BABY JAKE MATLALA** — South Africa 48-10-2
5. **JUAN CORDOBA** — Argentina 31-4-3
6. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO** — Mexico 50-5-4
7. **JOMA GAMBOA** — Philippines 23-3-1
8. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL** — Phoenix, AZ 45-4
9. **HI YONG CHOI** — South Korea 19-2
10. **JESUS CHONG** — Mexico 31-8

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** — Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES** — Light Heavyweight
3. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** — Heavyweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD** — Welterweight
5. **PERNELL WHITAKER** — Welterweight
6. **MARK JOHNSON** — Flyweight
7. **NASEEM HAMED** — Featherweight
8. **JOHNNY TAPIA** — Junior Bantamweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ** — Strawweight
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS** — Middleweight

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April 1985: Special Hagler-Hearns Program. Plus: British fighters, Hector Camacho, Donald Curry, Sonny Liston.

May 1985: The Rematch In Reno: Bramble-Mancini Color Action. Plus: Donald Curry, Aaron Pryor, McGuigan-LaPorte.

June 1985: Holmes' Last Hurrah? Holmes-Bey Color Action. Plus: Holmes vs. all-time greats, Paul-Arroyo, 1901.

July 1985: Marvelous Marvin! Are There Any More Mountains To Climb? Plus: Chavez, Tyson, Tubbs, Sullivan, great first rounds.

Aug. 1985: Seven Elected To The Ring Hall Of Fame (Jose Napoles, Jake LaMotta, Panama Al Brown, Manuel Ortiz, Young Stribling, Thomas Jackling, Lord Lonsdale). Plus: Spinks-Holmes preview, Barry McGuigan.

Sept. 1985: Barry McGuigan: Can He Be Boxing's Savior? Plus: Truth Williams, Tyrell Biggs, Greg Richardson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Paul-Blake, Witherspoon-Bonecrusher, Berbick-Bey, Pinklon Thomas.

Oct. 1985: The "Macho Man" Rides Again. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Berbick-Green, John E. Garcia, Dwight Muhammad Qawi, McCallum-Braxton.

Nov. 1985: Will Hagler Feast On The Beast? Plus: Hagler-Mugabi & Hearns-Shuler previews, Lonnie Smith, Pintor-Meza, Chuck Hull, Benitez-Moley.

Dec. 1985: Michael Spinks: Against All Odds. Plus: Curry-McCrory preview, McGuigan-Taylor, Alexis Arguello, Michael Olajide, Chavez-Pratchett.

Jan. 1986: In Search Of A Heavyweight Champion. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Arguello-Jefferson, Olympic update, Chicago boxing.

March 1986 (Awards Issue): Co-Fighters Of The Year: Marvelous Marvin Hagler & Donald Curry. Plus: Ring's Annual Awards, Evander Holyfield, Williamson-Muhammad, Camacho-Roach, 1985 boxing diary.

April 1986: Witherspoon Tames Tubbs For WBA Title. Plus: Dream fights, Greg Haugen, Tyrell Biggs, Mark Breland, Paul Gonzales, HBO tourney, Witherspoon-Tubbs, Frank Warren, Gene Tunney.

May 1986: Marvelous Marvin Tames The Beast. Plus: Hearns-Shuler, Mike Tyson, Bramble-Crawley, Sandoval-Canizales, Marvin Johnson, McGuigan-Cabrera, Arguello-Costello, Weaver-Williams.

June 1986: Barry's Back In The USA: McGuigan Breathes A Breath Of Fresh Air Into American Fight Scene. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Robbie Sims, Qawi-Holyfield preview, Berbick-Thomas, Bruno-Coetzee.

July 1986: Spinks-Holmes II: Who Really Won? Plus: Frank Bruno, Richie Sandoval, Kevin Watts, Tyson-Tillis, Boza-Edwards-Alli, Johnson-Burns.

Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

Sept. 1986: Gerry Cooney vs. Mike Tyson: Who Would Win? Plus: Cruz-McGuigan, Hearns-Medal, Tyson-Gross, Sims-Duran.

Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

April 1987: Hagler-Leonard Souvenir Issue. Plus: Czyz, Orlando Canizales, Mugabi-Thomas, Biggs-Snipes, Chavez-LaPorte, Bonecrusher-Witherspoon II, Haugen-Paul.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, *The Ring* annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new *Ring* ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Aug. 1987: Sugar Ray: Still In Style. Plus: Leonard-Hagler, all-time heavyweight ratings, Czyz-MacDonald, Camacho-Davis.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn-Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Rocky Lockridge & Roger Mayweather, Panama, Tony Burton, Chavez-Rosario, Gervacio-Espinoza, Vaca-Honeyghan.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Aug. 1988: Julio Cesar Chavez: The Kid From Culiacan. Plus: Holyfield, bad decisions, Lockridge-Knight, Starling-Breland II, Brown-Trice, Haugen-Santana.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Jan. 1990: Boxing's Bible Reborn At Age 68. Plus: Carlos Monzon, Mike Tyson, Leonard-Duran, Daniel Zaragoza, Nunn-Barkley, Whitaker-Ramirez, George Foreman (color).

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March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

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Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

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Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again-How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson's Fight For Greatness—Will November 8 Be His Moment? Plus: Edwin Rosario, Jeff Fenech, overrated/underrated, Giardello-Graham, Lennox Lewis, Marcel Cerdan, Leonard-Hearns I, heavyweight computer tournament, Ali portrait (color).

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Jan. 1992: Our Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Jerry Quarry, Julio Cesar Chavez, Mysterious Billy Smith, Joey Gamache, moving up in weight, Billy Conn-Michael Spinks, Joe Louis (color).

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Aug. 1995: Can Tyson Go From Great To All-Time Great? Plus: Antonio Barrera, Collins-Eubanks, Johnny Paychek, McCall-Holmes.

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Dec. 1995: McNeeley Goes Too Soon—Mike Tyson: The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Tommy Morrison, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, best chins.

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Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Also: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

April 1996: Oscar De La Hoya—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Mike Tyson, Gabe Ruelas, 1995 in review, All-Time Top 10: Africa.

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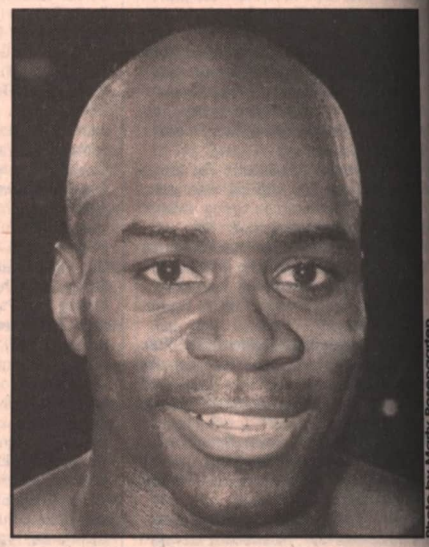
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PRO RECORD

1997		
Feb. 22	Brian Hollins, Uncasville, CT	KO 2
April 26	Kenyon Johnson, Atlantic City	KO 2
July 1	Ed Spivey, Atlantic City	KO 3
Sept. 23	Allan Cromp, Ledyard, CT	W 4
Nov. 11	Joe Paladino, Upper Marlboro, MD	KO 2
1998		
Feb. 6	Benny Rosalos, Uncasville	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
6	6	0	0	5

Glenn Robinson is safe again in his anonymous cocoon, because by now almost everyone has forgotten. Robinson made national news one time, for all the wrong reasons. In 1996, during the Olympic Trials, a mixup occurred and Robinson was never told the proper time of his fight with Antonio Tarver in the finals. Consequently, he missed the fight and forfeited a chance to represent the United States at light heavyweight in the 1996 Olympics.

The reminders were never subtle. Robinson felt he could never escape the mistake. It seemed like every newspaper across the country had a story about the incident. Almost everywhere Robinson turned, he was reminded on a daily basis by neighbors and friends, who would ask: "I was looking for you on TV. What happened to that fight you were supposed to have?"

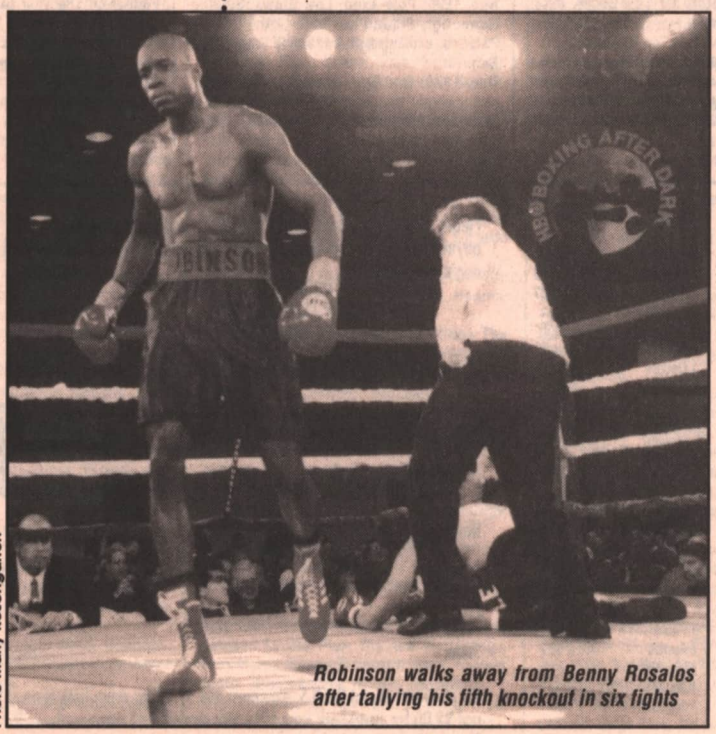

Photo Marty Rosengarten

Robinson walks away from Benny Rosalos after tallying his fifth knockout in six fights

The 6'3" banger from the Bronx, New York, can talk about it now, even though he's still bluntly reminded occasionally. He's a professional, he'll remind you, with a 6-0 (5) record. He's also quick to point out *that* Glenn Robinson is different from *this* Glenn Robinson, the professional fighter.

"Right now, I'm doing well as a pro. That's the past, and I throw that behind me," he said. "I can't sit here and think about what happened in the past."

The frustrating part about the Olympic Trials mess was that Robinson, 29, was basically the only competition for Tarver. While Tarver himself went on to a disappointing bronze medal Olympic finish, Robinson never got a chance to show what he can do. The Robinson-Tarver bout was much anticipated, but because some boxers were switch-

(Continued on page 62)

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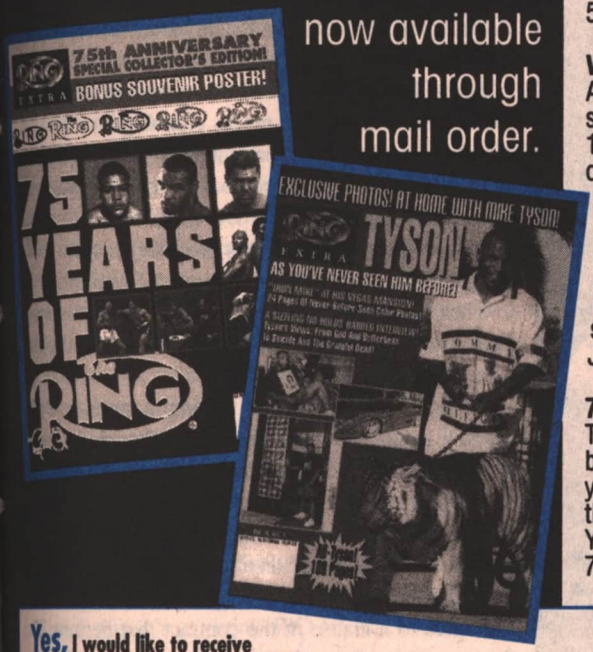

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Photo by Marty Rosenglanten

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

DAREDEVILISH

Where have all the fun sports gone? Oh, how some of us long for the days of televised demolition derby, wrist-wrestling, the World Lumberjack Championships, and an airborne Evel Knievel. That stuff always made for a great Saturday afternoon—except, of course, on those days when ABC used it as an excuse to delay the start of a boxing match we'd been anticipating for weeks.

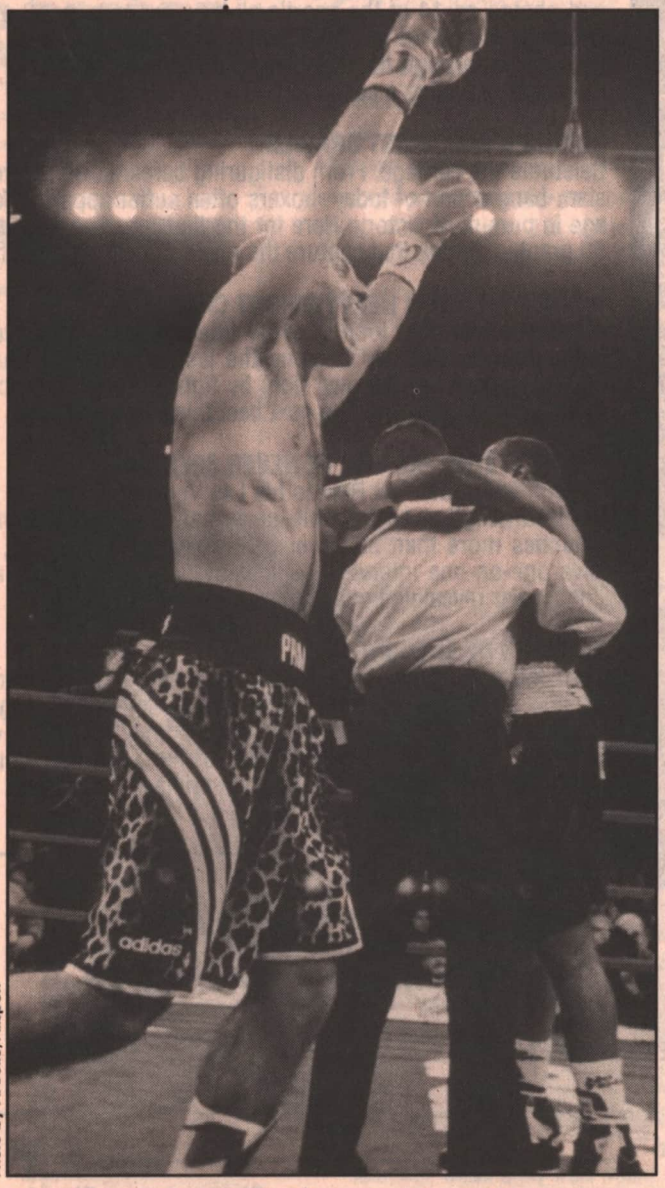


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Hamed celebrates his up-from-the-floor knockout of Kevin Kelley. But according to Ryan, "The Prince's" fists aren't the only thing about him putting others at risk.

In February, the Fox Network recaptured the flavor of that matinee mayhem with *Daredevils Live!*, a two-hour special capped off by a Robbie Knievel motorcycle jump that promised to either a) shatter the distance record set by Robbie's dad, or b) shatter a good many of the kid's bones. Happy to report that the heir to the Knievel legend broke only the record, touching down as softly as Mouse Strauss always did when he fought an unbeaten prospect in the kid's hometown.

Son of Evel cleared 30 limousines (rich kids, don't try this at home), a feat that makes climbing into the ring with Roy Jones, signing a promotional contract with Don King, or sitting for an interview with Alex Wallau seem not all that dangerous. You know what, if boxing people want to prove how fearless they are, let's see *them* make an appearance on the next installment of *Daredevils Live!*

There are plenty of heart-stopping challenges awaiting our heroes and heroines. That is, if they have the guts to face them. For instance …

•Mike Tyson can attempt to jump a steam-powered skycycle over the gap between what he thought he had in his savings account and what he actually does have.

•Cornerman Chuck Bodak can tape a picture of Don King to his head and not flinch when Tyson's wife, Dr. Monica Turner, hurls her set of scalpels at it.

•Ricardo Lopez can sign for a fight with Butterbean, and agree to a clause in the contract that permits The Bean to come in "over the weight."

•Naseem Hamed can put his mouth where his money is by debating the Surgeon General on *Meet The Press*. The topic: whether or not the second-hand smoke from "The Prince's" ring entrance poses a serious health risk to his entourage.

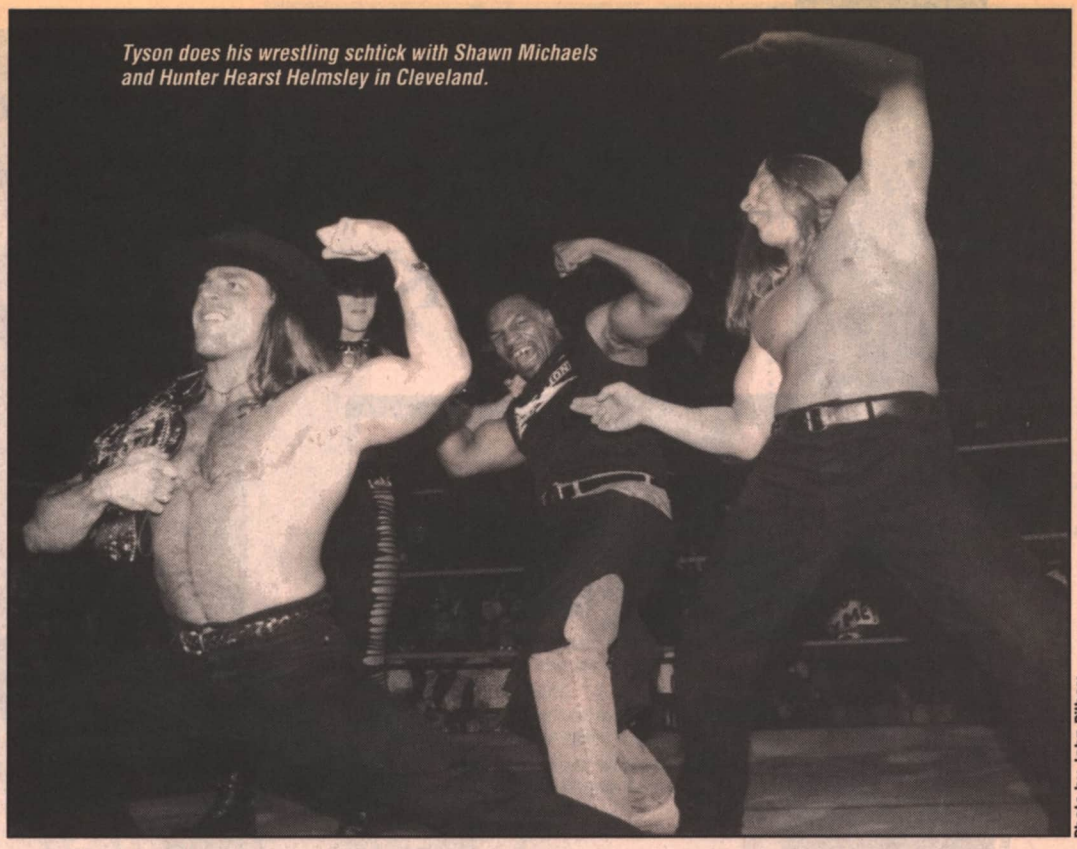
•A group of scribes can risk incurring the wrath of a certain welterweight by taking him to Killington, Vermont, then telling him that when they promised him mountains of white powder, they were actually talking about a ski trip.

•Any trainer in the game who's bold enough can attempt to collect three paychecks in a row without being fired by Oscar De La Hoya. (Good luck.)

•George Foreman, Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, and Larry Holmes can make one more attempt at growing old gracefully. (At this point, jumping over 31 limos with a motorcycle might be easier.)

•In an incredible test of endurance, Evander Holyfield can attempt to vacuum all the bedrooms in his Georgia mansion in the same month.

•Fresh off his softball-tossing to O.J. Simpson on a New York radio station, Rock Newman can host a Washington, D.C., radio show, feature President Clinton, Monica Lewinsky, and Paula Jones as guests, and begin the interview with a tougher question than, "How 'bout those Redskins?"



Tyson does his wrestling schtick with Shawn Michaels and Hunter Hearst Helmsley in Cleveland.

Photo by John Pithers

•The not-shy-or-retiring Foreman can once again fight five heavyweight pugs in one afternoon in Toronto. The last time Big George went looking for five bums who would offer minimal resistance, he searched the cemeteries. This time, he needs only to look in the top 10.

•Christy Martin can try to keep her nose from gushing blood, not in a showdown with Lucia Rijker, but while climbing up to the auxiliary press section at one of King's fight cards.

•Five minutes before the Julio Cesar Chavez-Miguel Angel Gonzalez rematch is set to start at the Capital Plaza del Toros in Mexico City, ring announcer Jimmy Lennon Jr. can tell the inebriated crowd that the bout has been canceled due to a spasm in Gonzalez' little toe. Lennon can then pause for dramatic effect and yell to the masses, "April Fool!"

•Jim Lampley can prove the doomsayers wrong by actually making it through an entire HBO telecast without using any five-syllable words. And if that proves too difficult? Well, having already destroyed an incalculable amount of the ozone layer with his hairspray through the years, Lamps can dare to use a sunscreen with an SPF of only two.

•Riddick Bowe can watch a *Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C.* marathon on Nickelodeon without suffering post traumatic stress disorder.

•Michael Buffer can holler, "Llll-et's get rrrr-eady to rrrr-umble!" while standing downwind of Butterbean at a Taco Bell.

•Andrew Golota can go one-on-one with Latrell Sprewell in a hardwood battle of guys who cost themselves millions of dollars when they choked.

•Vinny "The Pazmanian Daredevil" Pazienza can drink three pots of coffee before a rematch with Roy Jones, try to pull out the victory despite crashing hard from the caffeine high, and then suppress the urge to demand that he play "El Exigente" in a new series of Savarin commercials.

•Notorious name-botcher Ferdie Pacheco can work a Showtime doubleheader featuring Pichitnoi C. Siriwat vs. Phanieng Sasiprabha and Saman Sorjaturong vs. Takashi Shiohama.

•Los Angelinos can survey what has become of boxing in their once-great fight town and try not to burst into tears.

•Mills Lane can call Casey Kasem's request line, tell the DJ about the last album ESPN's Al Bernstein recorded, and yell, "Let's get it on!" (Talk about showing guts.)

•Forty-eight-year-old Joe Bugner can promise to face only those fighters who hadn't yet been conceived when he first fought Muhammad Ali.

•Tyson can stop getting into wimpy pushing matches with today's World Wrestling Federation lightweights and try standing up to George Steele's flying hammerlock, Baron Von Raschke's brain claw, or Stan Hansen's lariat.

•Larry Merchant can narrate an HBO documentary on Sugar Ray Robinson and suppress the urge to call the legendary champion "the Shane Mosley of his time."

•Junior bantamweight Ratanachai Dutchboy Gym can battle flyweight Chatchai Dutchboy Gym in a Loser-Sticks-His-Finger-in-the-Dike Match.

•King can open a 24-hour jewelry store in Mexico City.

•And, while in his current financial state, Tyson can attempt one of the toughest stunts of all: not trying to jump 30 limos, but trying to *hire* just one. ■

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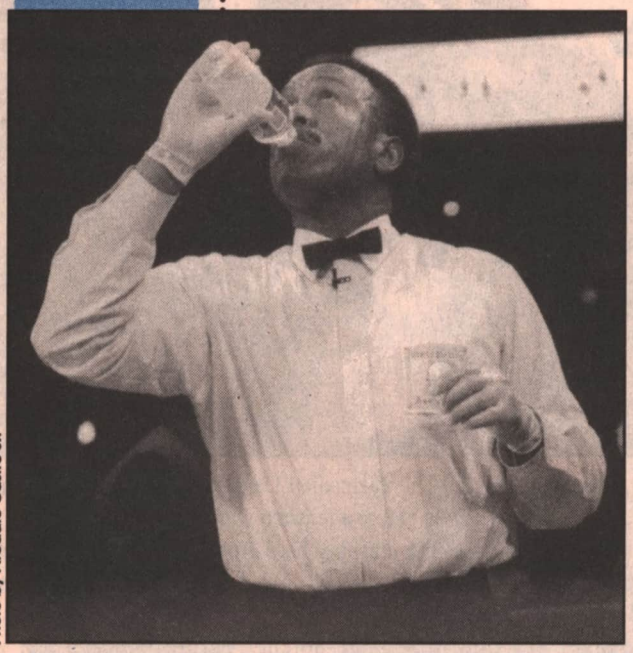


Photo by Arcadio Castro Jr.

The fighters aren't the only ones thankful for the breaks between rounds, as evidenced by sweaty referee Max Parker cooling off during William Joppy's WBA middleweight title victory over Julio Cesar Green. And Parker doesn't even have the luxury of a stool or a spit bucket.

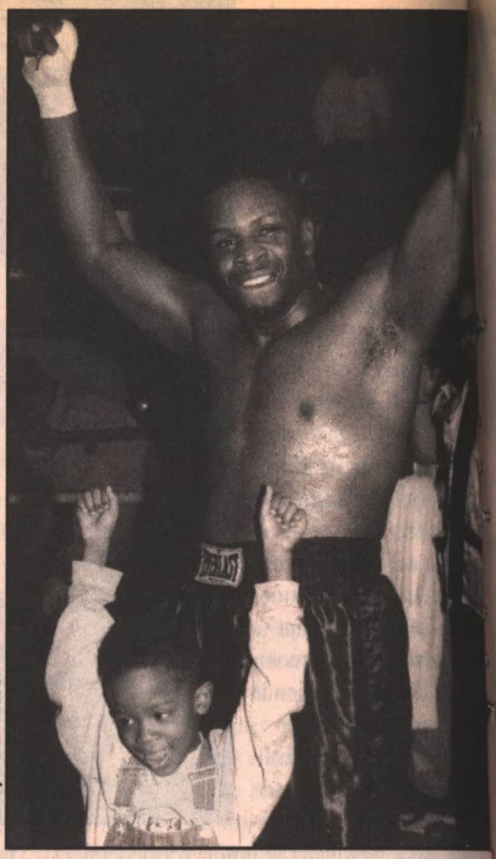


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Confusion reigned when the ring announcer declared Terrance Lewis the winner over Darroll Wilson, as more than one Terrance Lewis raised his arms in victory. Dad had done all the work, knocking out Wilson in the fifth round on February 3, but Terrance Jr. was glad to take some of the credit as well.

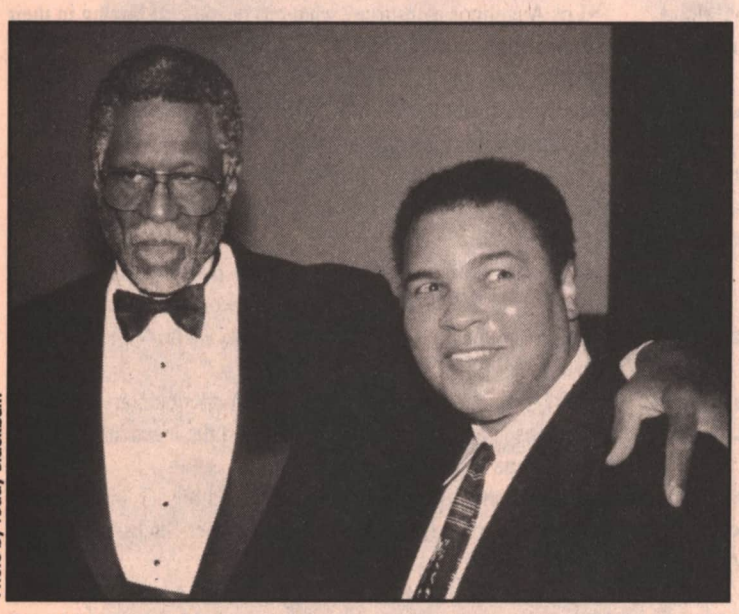


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Two of the greatest big men of all-time came together recently, as Muhammad Ali poses with one of the few athletes to win more world championships than him, legendary Boston Celtics center Bill Russell.

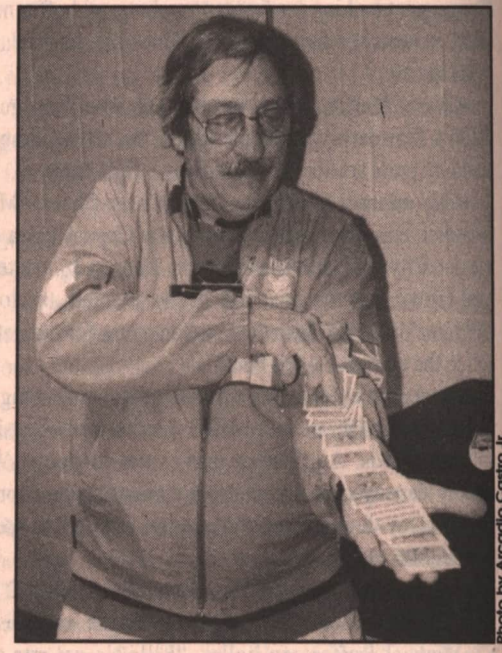


Photo by Arcadio Castro Jr.

The phrase "the hand is quicker than the eye" is usually used in reference to magic, but it certainly applies to boxing as well—with much more dangerous implications for the victim. Here, Florida commissioner Al Goodman, who is also a magician, brushes up on some card tricks.

Miguel Angel Gonzalez knew he would be stepping into the ring with a Mexican legend in early-March, but he didn't expect it to be former pro wrestling superstar Mil Mascaras. Gonzalez drew with Julio Cesar Chavez for the vacant WBC super lightweight title, never implementing Mascaras' strategy of using bodyshots to set up the dropkick.

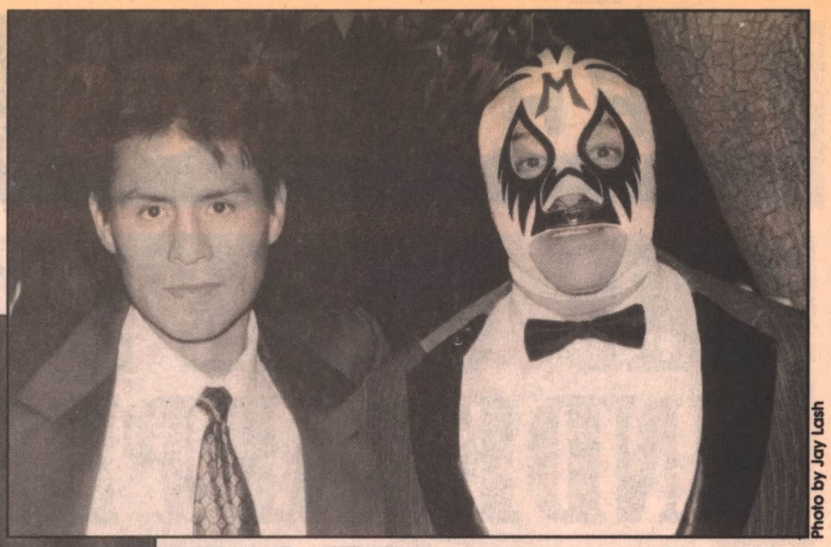


Photo by Jay Lash

Photo by Jay Lash

After Don King was robbed of his $100,000 Rolex in Mexico in the days leading up to the Chavez-Gonzalez fight, "J.C. Superstar" was thoughtful enough to replace his promoter's timepiece—with a cheap piece of black plastic. There is no truth to the report that King re-wrapped the watch and gave it to Mike Tyson, claiming it was worth $100,000.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

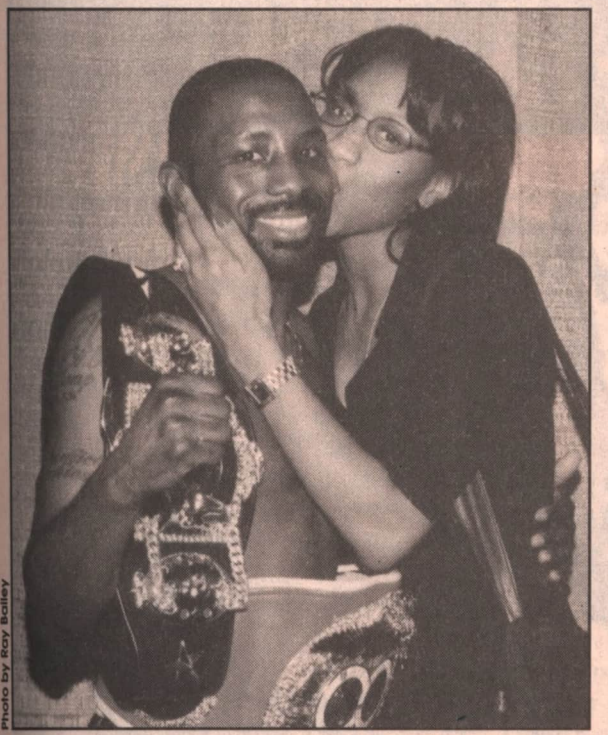
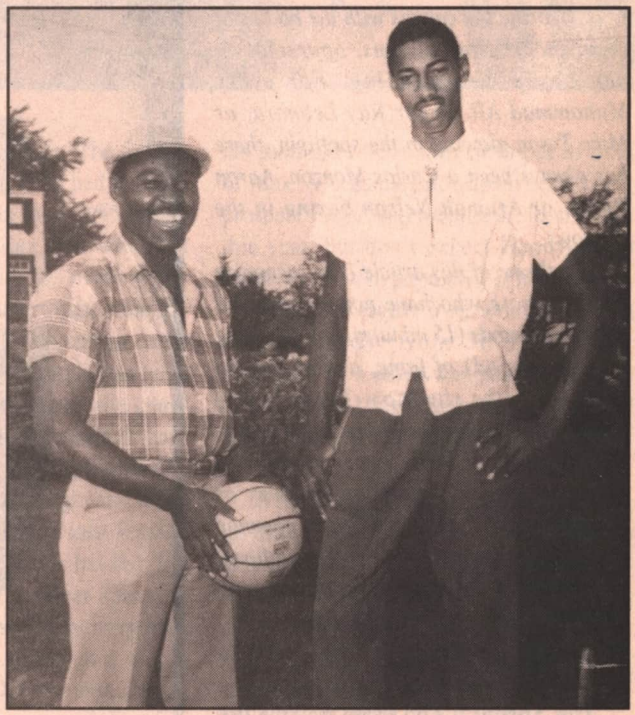


Photo by Roy Bailey

IBF flyweight champion Mark Johnson's wife, Samantha, had to be happy about her man disposing of Arthur Johnson before the challenger had a chance to mark up his face.



Former heavyweight champion Ezzard Charles may have been in a little over his head challenging this kid to a game of one-on-one. The opponent, of course, was 7'1" high school basketball sensation Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain, who like Charles, went on to enjoy a hall of fame pro career.

Accolades For The Unacknowledged

THE GAME'S 10 MOST UNDERAPPRECIATED FIGHTERS

By D.E. Thomas

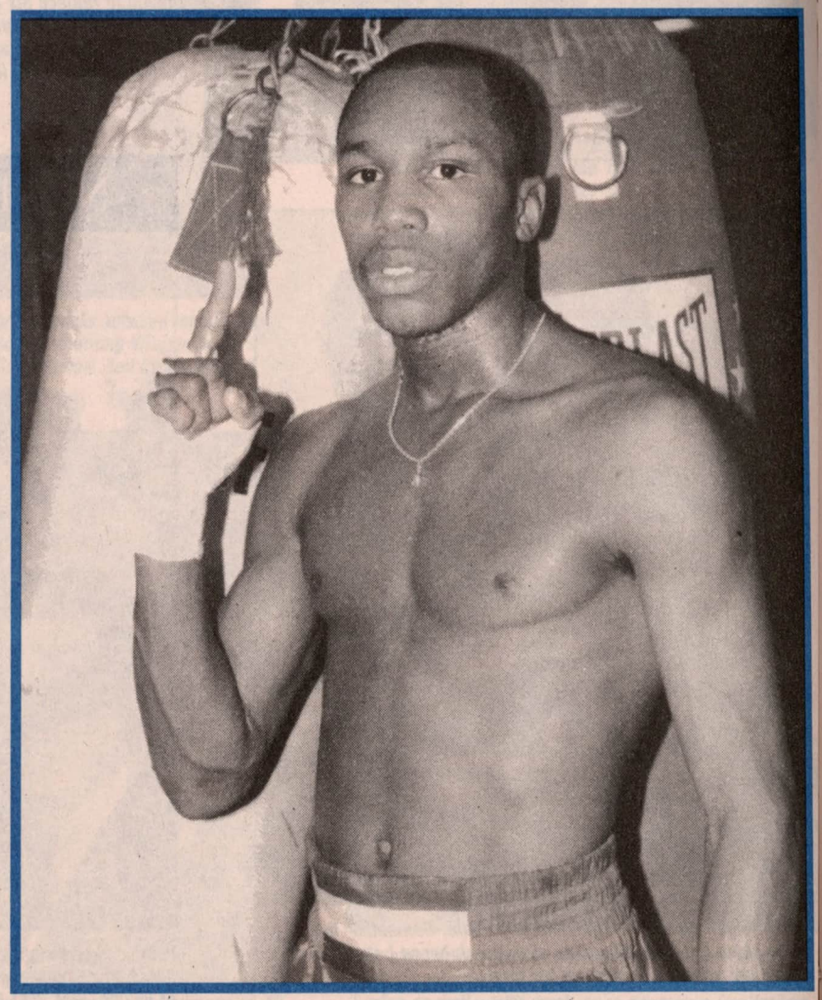
Van Gogh gave up an ear for his art, but he never gained the instant appreciation from the art world that Evander Holyfield has been afforded from aficionados of the Sweet Science.

Among painters, as well as those artists who decorate the canvas with the bodies of their knocked-out victims, appreciation can be an elusive thing. For every Muhammad Ali, Sugar Ray Leonard, or Mike Tyson glowing in the spotlight, there has always been a Carlos Monzon, Aaron Pryor, or Azumah Nelson boxing in the shadows.

The theme of this article is to recognize some of those who have not yet received their five rounds (15 minutes, not including the rest period) of fame, and suggest a remedy for the situation. These boxers range from bantamweight to light heavyweight and hail from homes as near as Syracuse, New York, and as far away as South Africa. What they share in common is a gift for the fight game and an unfortunate knack for missing out on the recognition they deserve for their efforts.

Here, in no particular order, are boxing's 10 most underappreciated fighters:

Tim Austin: It's no secret why the IBF bantamweight champion is such a secret. While Oscar De La Hoya was grabbing all the Olympic boxing headlines in Barcelona, fellow U.S. team member Austin was toiling in his shadow. Signing with promoter Don King to begin his career may have been a wise career move for the Cincinnati native, but it did little to introduce him to the pugilistic public.

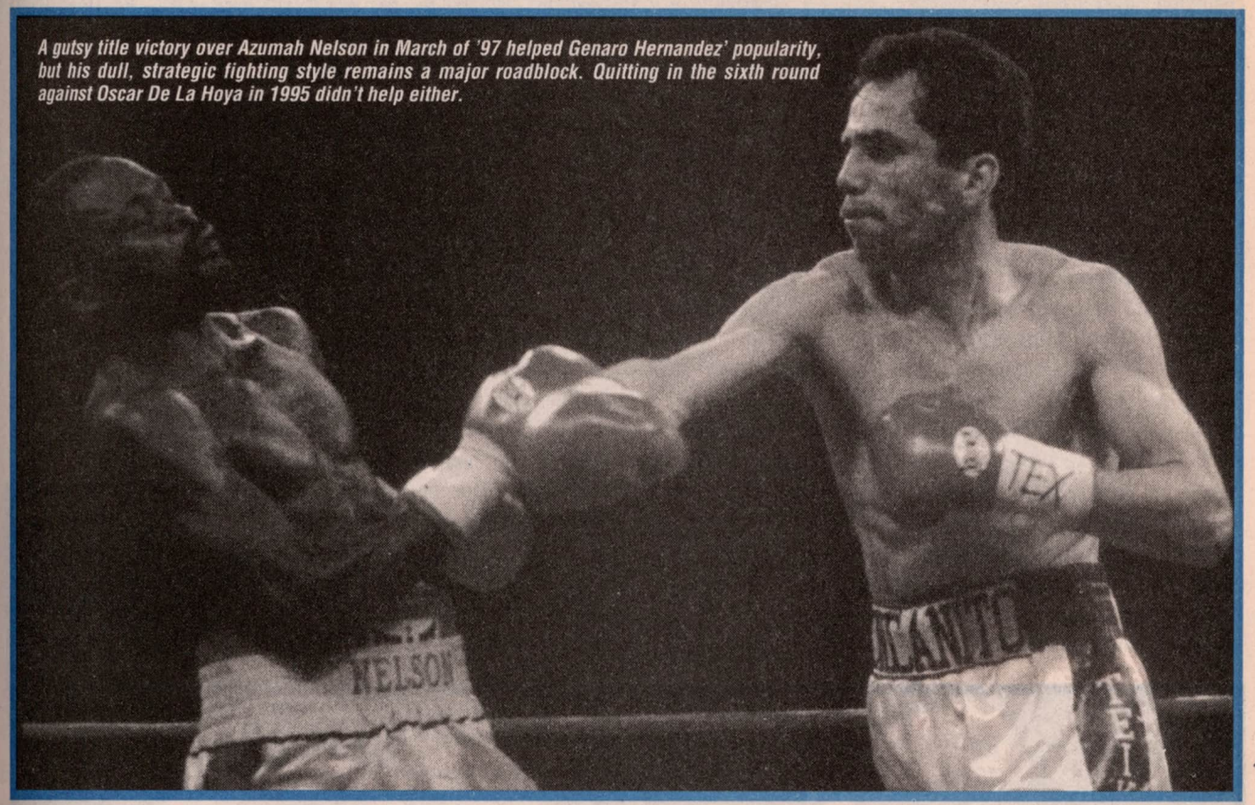


IBF bantamweight champ Tim Austin simply hasn't received the exposure you would expect for a former Olympian fighting for Don King. The undefeated "Cincinnati Kid" has the talent to dominate the 118-pound class and eventually gain the accolades he deserves.

Only the most punctual of fans got to watch Austin's early development. Many of his bouts were fought in the mid-afternoon on the bottom of King's marathon title cards. When Austin knocked out his first 10 opponents, few took notice. When he overcame a broken jaw to stop Mbulelo Botile to claim the IBF title, he raised some eyebrows, but didn't gain worldwide fame.

Only a long, successful run in the 118-pound ranks or a showdown with a high-profile opponent like Johnny Tapia will give Austin recognition on par with his talent.

Genaro Hernandez: Being the second-best fistic product from East L.A. isn't a bad deal, unless the top dog in that part of town happens to be known as "The Golden Boy." The truth is, even if he had he beaten Oscar De La Hoya in their 1995 neighborhood war, Hernandez still wouldn't have the kind of following his rival enjoys.



A gutsy title victory over Azumah Nelson in March of '97 helped Genaro Hernandez' popularity, but his dull, strategic fighting style remains a major roadblock. Quitting in the sixth round against Oscar De La Hoya in 1995 didn't help either.

The WBC super featherweight champion's lack of charisma has nothing to do with his personality. It's his style that turns off many avid fight fans. Those who clamor for blood and guts simply would be happier watching someone else. The reed-thin Hernandez likes to use his height and reach advantages to turn his bouts into fencing matches. That his careful style has left him with just one defeat in a career spanning nearly 40 bouts makes him at the very least one of the near-greats of his day. But it doesn't make him a draw at the box office.

Hernandez seems content with his situation. He gained praise for rising from an after-the-bell knockdown to outpoint Azumah Nelson for the 130-pound title, and he has accepted whatever challenges his promoters have seen fit to put in front of him. A possible showdown with rising prospect Floyd Mayweather Jr. looms later this year, but don't expect Hernandez to suddenly grow in popularity if he wins.

Winky Wright: You would think an able southpaw from St. Petersburg, Florida, with a name that sounds like one of the Seven Dwarves would be a natural hometown draw at Disneyland in nearby Orlando.

Wright's plight is that he is a difficult lefthander who doesn't have enough drawing power to make the risk of fighting him worthwhile to the major players in the 154-pound ranks. You have never heard his name uttered by Felix Trinidad, Yory Boy Campas, Raul Marquez, or Terry Norris. He has had to take his game overseas to find an appreciative audience, with appearances in Luxembourg, Canada, France, Argentina, and England on his world tour.

It's not like the underrated boxer-puncher hasn't tried to appeal to U.S. fans. He holds wins over Andrew Council and Bronco McKart in a couple of his rare fights on home soil, but has fared better financially by taking his minor world championship abroad.

There's not a lot Wright can do. A unification with WBA champion Laurent Boudouani, a Frenchman, would be a natural, and holding a major title might get him closer to the big-money picture. Wright is only 26 years old, so time is in his favor. If he is patient, the right opportunity may present itself.

Reggie Johnson: Just when he seemed to be headed for the "whatever-happened-to" file, Johnson pops up to dismantle powerpuncher William Guthrie for the IBF light heavyweight championship. That most boxing insiders still thought of the slick southpaw as a middleweight is an illustration of how far from the limelight he has been.

Johnson's fortunes took a downturn before the Guthrie fight revived his career. He won the vacant WBA middleweight championship against Steve Collins in 1992 and defended it three times before losing to John David Jackson by decision in Argentina 17 months later. He ventured back to Argentina twice to face native son Jorge Castro in bids to win back the belt, but came up short on points both times.

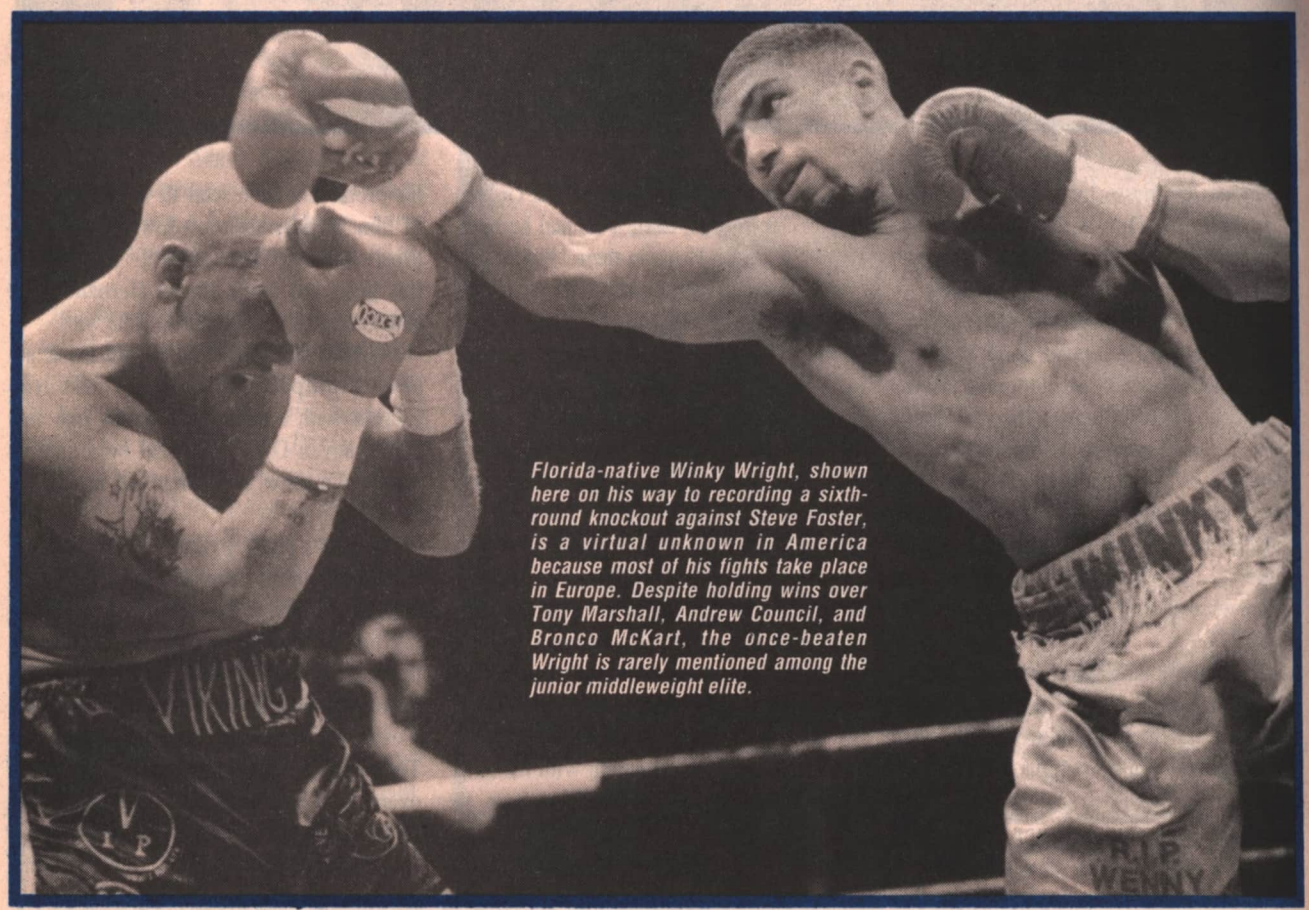
Discouraged, Johnson didn't fight again in '95 after the second loss to Castro and took the next year off completely. It's no wonder he was seen largely as easy pickings for Guthrie before pulling off the upset. Johnson was due for a break. The losses to Castro were disputed, and he was still clearly one of the top middleweights around when he elected to take a vacation from the ring.

Now that he's back on top, Johnson is in a bit of a quandary. The 175-pound ranks aren't what they used to be, so there are few contenders who can enhance his stature. His best hope is for HBO to proceed with its light heavyweight elimination tournament to produce a worthy opponent for Roy Jones, and to avoid Argentina at all costs.

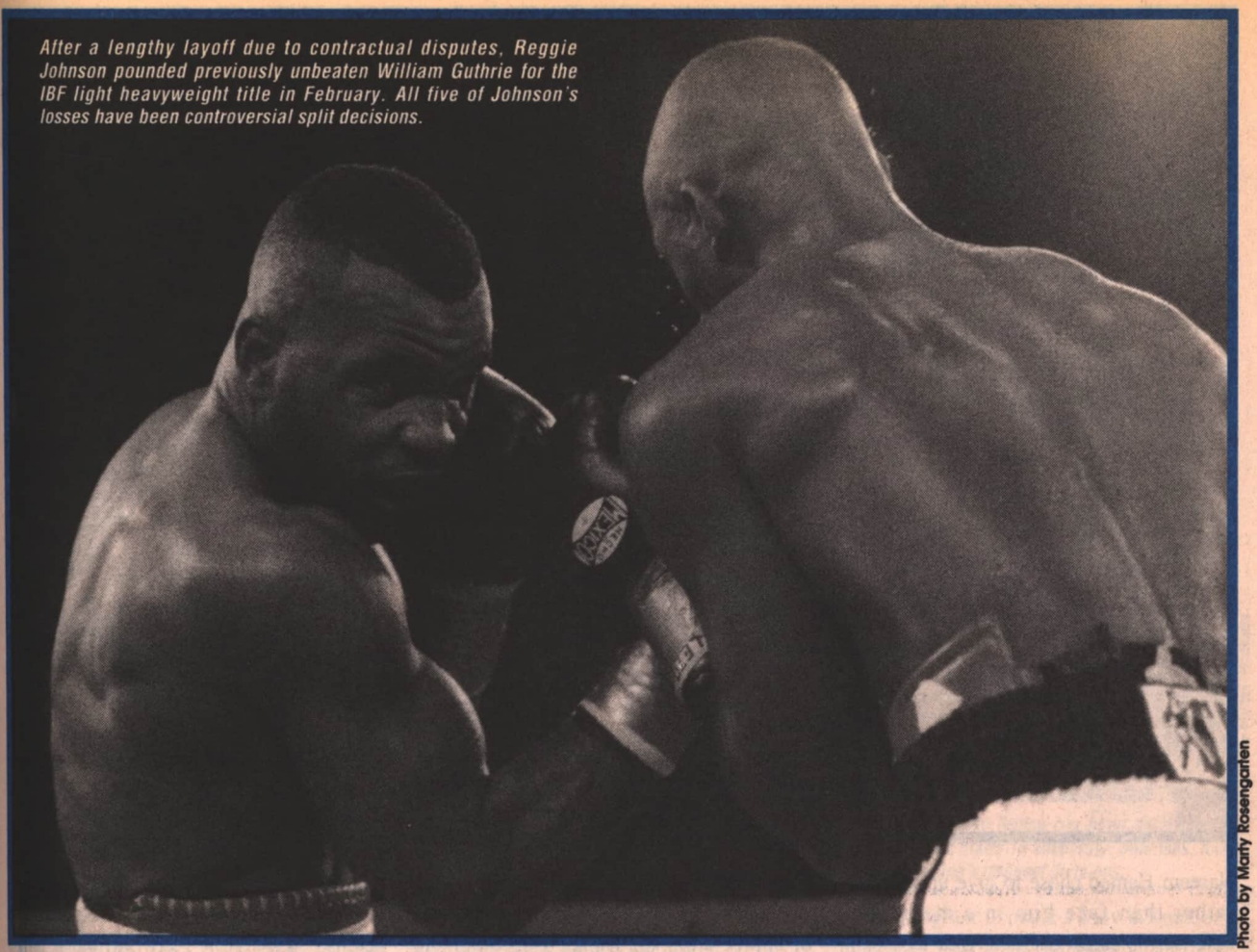
Keith Holmes: No, he's not related to the former heavyweight champion with the same last name, although the WBC middleweight champ does have a fine jab (in his case a right jab) and above-average boxing skills. This product of Washington, D.C., might not reside in the underappreciated category if he reported for work more frequently.

After Holmes won the title from Quincy Taylor and made his first defense with a hard-fought 12th-round technical knockout of England's Richie Woodhall, he found himself in a three-way debate with fellow champions Bernard Hopkins and William Joppy over 160-pound bragging rights. Hopkins has run off a series of impressive victories since then, while Joppy has lost and regained the WBA belt. Holmes made a cameo appearance in a mandatory defense against Paul Vaden, then disappeared from the scene.

If Holmes craves a grateful public, he can start by making a late New Year's resolution to get busy. Out of sight is out of mind. You are only as good as your last fight, and no one even vaguely remembers the Vaden bout. The southpaw has the skill to be recognized as one of the better fighters around in what has historically been a marquee division, but at age 30, his days



Florida-native Winky Wright, shown here on his way to recording a sixth-round knockout against Steve Foster, is a virtual unknown in America because most of his fights take place in Europe. Despite holding wins over Tony Marshall, Andrew Council, and Bronco McKart, the once-beaten Wright is rarely mentioned among the junior middleweight elite.



After a lengthy layoff due to contractual disputes, Reggie Johnson pounded previously unbeaten William Guthrie for the IBF light heavyweight title in February. All five of Johnson's losses have been controversial split decisions.

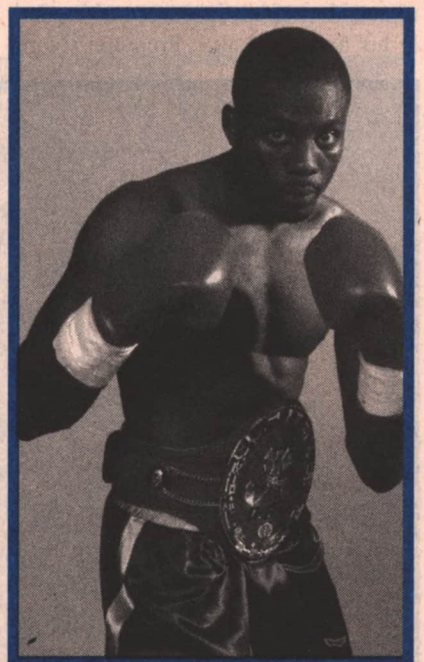
Photo by Marty Rosengarten

are numbered. A string of defenses would be a welcome change, as he can't afford to wait any longer for a mega-fight that isn't going to happen anytime soon.

Frankie Liles: The WBA super middleweight champion is a victim of poor career choices. He turned down a million-dollar shot at Roy Jones, over whom he holds an amateur victory, when he wasn't under contract to any manager or promoter. Had he taken that gamble, win or lose, he would probably be better-known today.

The lefthander from Syracuse, New York, has made six successful defenses since winning his title from Steve Little in 1994, beating difficult Michael Nunn and avenging his only defeat with a thrilling knockout of Tim Littles two years later. Those kind of wins should have vaulted Liles into some sort of bigger-stakes venture, but he wasted last year with meaningless exercises against Segundo Mercado and Zafarou Ballogou.

Perhaps Liles' awkward style is the reason promoter Don King has chosen to take him to far-away locales. Battling in places like Argentina, Ecuador, Germany, and England may have given Liles more frequent flier miles than any other 168-pounder, but it hasn't made him a superstar. In boxing, exposure is everything.

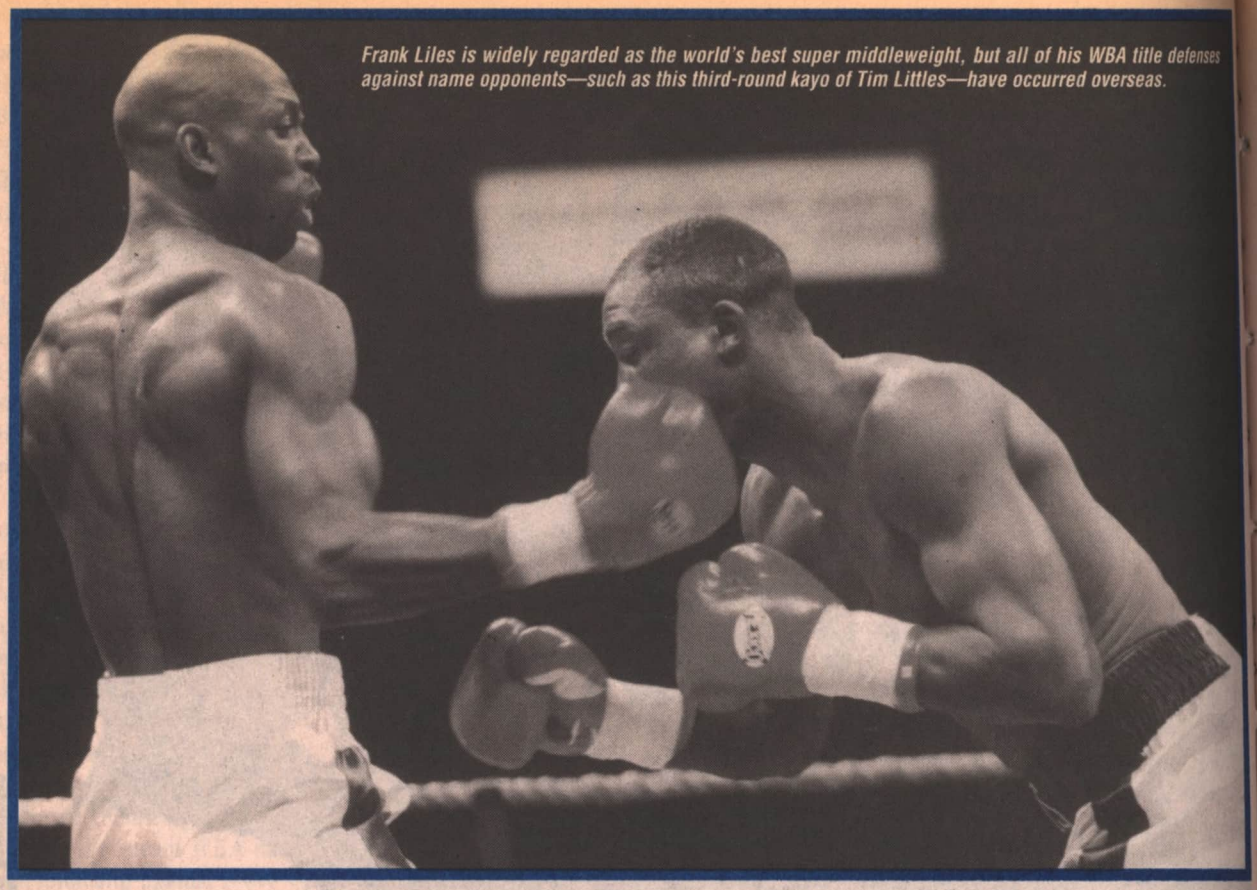


WBC middleweight champion Keith Holmes simply hasn't been active enough to make a name for himself. A skilled boxer with a strong jab, Holmes, 29, needs to defend more often rather than holding out for unification bouts that may never happen.

If those same fights had taken place on heavyweight championship undercards in Las Vegas, the pay-per-view exposure might have taken Liles to a higher plateau. That kind of opportunity would be a well-deserved reward for the 33-year-old champion, the kind that might make the public take notice.

Hector Lizarraga: No one can say the IBF featherweight champion hasn't paid his dues. Unfortunately for the talented Lizarraga, he may have been over-billed. At one point, the Fresno, California, product had a record of 18-8-4 and the resume of a clubfighter.

Since a 1991 loss to Francisco Valdez, Lizarraga has run off 15 victories without a defeat, culminating with his 11th-round stoppage of Welcome Ncita for the vacant 126-pound championship. Anyone who witnessed that performance can see why



Frank Liles is widely regarded as the world's best super middleweight, but all of his WBA title defenses against name opponents—such as this third-round kayo of Tim Littles—have occurred overseas.

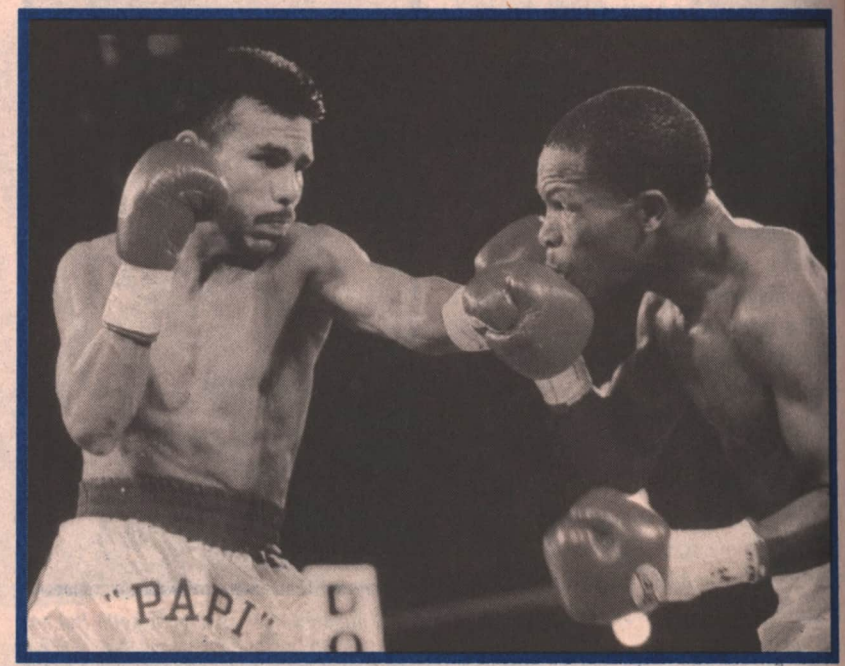
Naseem Hamed chose to give up that belt rather than face him in a mandatory defense his camp characterized as meaningless.

As seems to be the case with many of boxing's underappreciated warriors, Lizarraga is a classic late-bloomer. At age 31, he seems to be just now hitting his stride. If he can maintain the form he showed against Ncita for another year or two, all those years on the California club circuit will have been worth it.

Lizarraga's dream fight is a unification bout against Hamed, but he is not without other challenges. If "The Prince" isn't willing to meet his challenge, he can start with Freddie Norwood, Derrick Gainer, Angel Vazquez, or old warhorse Orlando Canizales, any of whom would enhance his profile and confirm his world-class credentials.

Vuyani Bungu: The IBF junior featherweight champion might be a hero in his native South Africa, but he's still rather obscure in the big picture. All Bungu has done since winning the title with a decision over Kennedy McKinney in 1994 is make 10 successful defenses of his crown, including a repeat victory over the man from whom he took the belt.

Geography plays a big part in the lack of appreciation for Bungu's accomplishments. Most of his fights have taken place in his native country. Promoter Cedric Kushner was willing to lose a bundle to bring his charge to Mississippi for a defense on the USA Network, but it failed to open any doors. Unfortunately for Bungu, fighters he has beaten, like



Hector Lizarraga, 34-8-5 (20), may have an ugly record, but he also possesses a world-class body attack and an unbeaten streak that dates back to 1991. He won the IBF featherweight title by knocking out Welcome Ncita in Pompano Beach, Florida, last December.

McKinney and Jesus Salud, are better-known than he is.

At age 31, breaking into the upper echelon will take some aggressive career planning. Unification tilts with Erik Morales or McKinney or attractive crossroads fights with the likes of Wayne McCullough, Junior Jones, Marco Antonio Barrera, or Daniel Zaragoza would be big steps forward. And Naseem Hamed is rumored to be contemplating a move back down to junior featherweight, the biggest possible bonanza for Bungu.

Thulane Malinga: "Sugarboy" is another South African. Strike one. His punch of choice is an annoying left jab. Strike two. His only American appearance in 52 fights was a stunning one-punch knockout loss to a rising Roy Jones. Strike three.

Malinga is what the British like to call a "negative" fighter. His talent is for nullifying whatever his opponent is trying to do and, some would say, avoiding a fight. He is a classic cutie, one who can frustrate an opponent into his kind of fight by use of his defensive skills and crafty footwork. It doesn't make for a thrilling brawl, but it has made Malinga the kind of fighter most of the top names seek to avoid.

In winning the WBC super middleweight championship from Robin Reid, Malinga continued his run of impressive performances on English soil. He lost debatable decisions to Chris Eubank and Nigel Benn in the early-1990s before returning to outpoint Benn for the WBC belt in '96. He lost the belt to Vincenzo Nardiello, who in turn lost it to Reid.

Malinga's best course may be to catch the next plane back to Britain, where Steve Collins is still making noise about a comeback, Herol Graham has already started one, and up-and-comer Joe Calzaghe is on the move. Malinga's style is well-tailored to a European audience that can appreciate his approach to the Sweet Science.

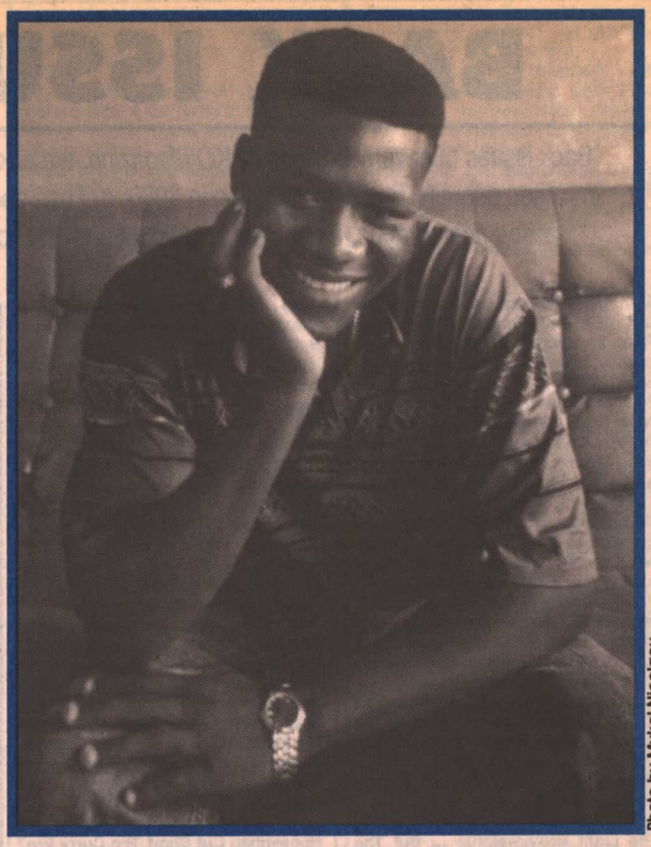


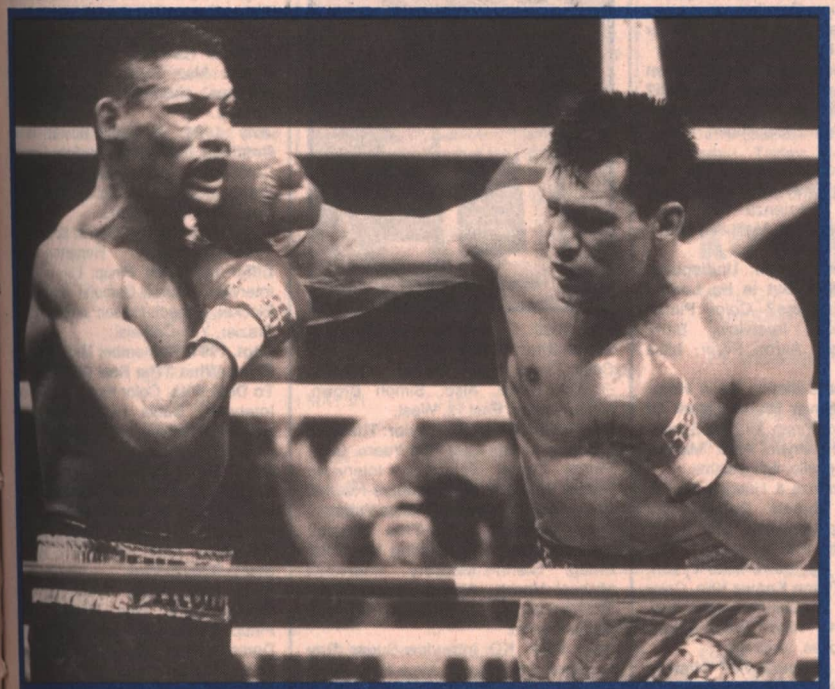
Photo by Mykel Nicolaou

Seen relaxing at home, South African Vuyani Bungu has been anything but relaxed as IBF junior feather champ. He's made 10 successful defenses, and is arguably the best fighter in one of boxing's deepest divisions.

Dariusz Michalczewski: The last German fighter to make a truly international impact was Max Schmeling, and that was a long time ago. Since the country was unified, Germany has begun to produce some capable contenders. To date, Michalczewski seems to be the best.

That the undefeated light heavyweight doesn't hold a major belt is no indication of his ability. Ask Virgil Hill, who took a serious beating in losing the WBA and IBF championships to the bruising challenger. Michalczewski gave up both belts rather than meet the mandatory defense requirements of the sanctioning bodies, choosing instead to campaign at home on his own terms.

That attitude isn't going to add to Michalczewski's international reputation. Boxing fans were left waiting for more after the Hill fight solidified his standing in the division, but negotiations for a unification fight with Jones went nowhere. Michalczweski spent the time between his 1994 upset of Leeonzer Barber and last year's win over Hill marking time against insignificant European opposition. If the 31-year-old has any plans to make a move, he may have to leave the comfort of his homeland soon. ■



Although he's a major star in Germany, light heavyweight Dariusz Michalczewski has zero marquee value in the United States. Even his outstanding victory over Virgil Hill in June 1997 failed to make much of an impression on this side of the Atlantic.

BACK ISSUES OF KO

Back issues of several editions of *KO Magazine*, the acknowledged leader in boxing journalism, are still available in limited quantity. Since its inception in 1980, *KO* has become known for its quality stories and columns and peak-action photographs. Plus, each issue contains a full-color centerfold. Don't delay. Supplies are running out!

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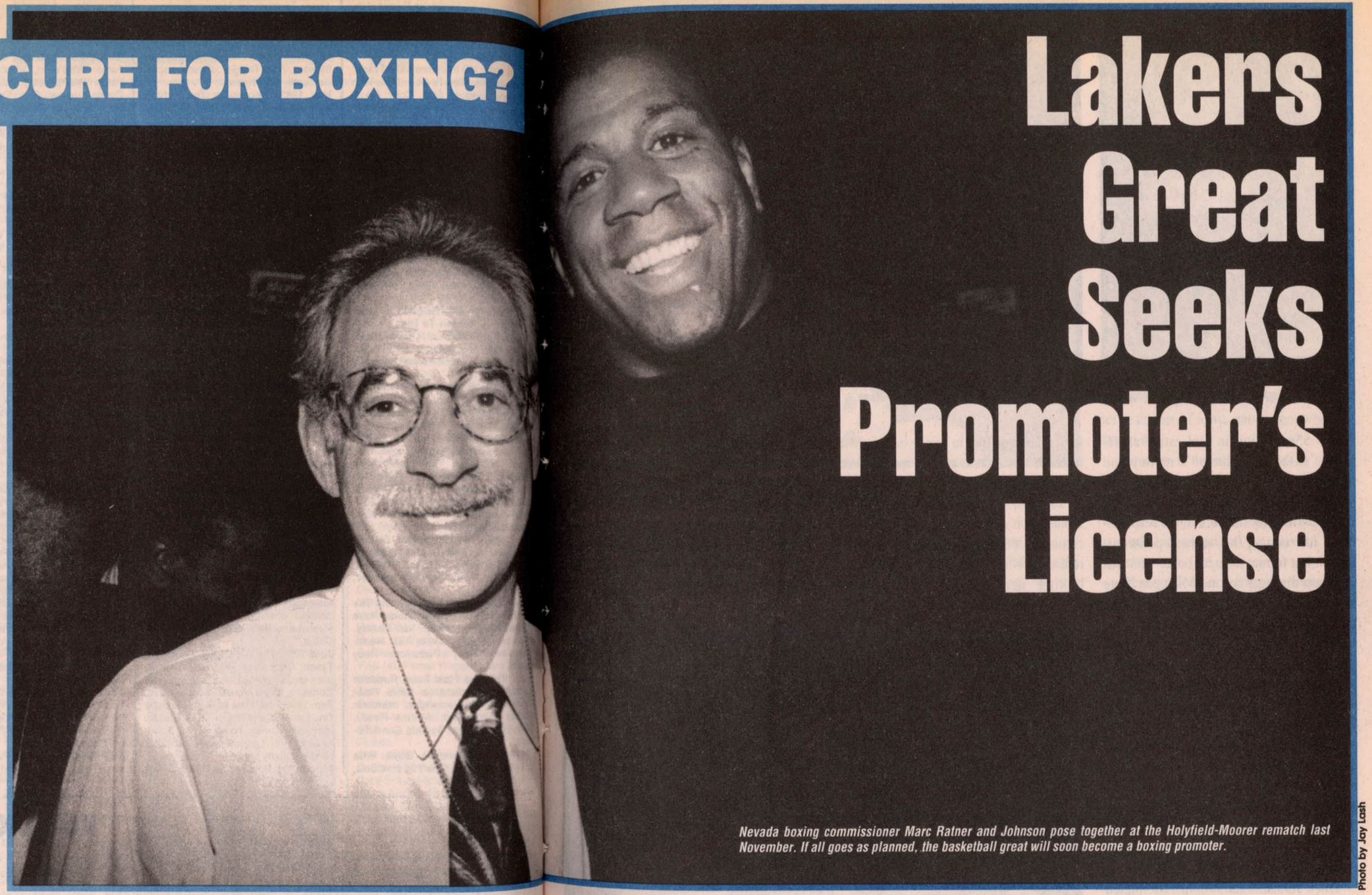


Nevada boxing commissioner Marc Ratner and Johnson pose together at the Holyfield-Moorer rematch last November. If all goes as planned, the basketball great will soon become a boxing promoter.

Photo by Jay Lash

By Tim Graham

It's been said so many times for so long by so many different people: Boxing needs a miracle. With all the turmoil, controversy, and confusion surrounding the sport, it's easy to see it could use some help. After all, the stellar deeds of Oscar De La Hoya and Evander Holyfield and Naseem Hamed can only do so much.

While miracles are few and far between, there is a new player on the horizon who certainly could add some magic to the world of boxing. Earvin "Magic" Johnson is on the verge of entering the boxing business as a promoter. And make no mistake: The beloved basketball legend is not looking for a hobby; don't expect him to put on club cards featuring has-beens and never-wases. He is looking for so much more. Johnson wants to make just as much of an impact on the canvas as he did on the hardwood.

And even though his complete promoter's application had yet to be filed with the Nevada State Athletic Commission at press time, Johnson already is making his boxing presence felt. The man who led the Los Angeles Lakers to five NBA championships is ready to tally some assists for the other sport he loves.

Mike Tyson has inquired about Johnson's services. So has Roy Jones. Johnson also in negotiating to have Hamed headline his debut promotion, which could happen in July in Las Vegas. The event would be a joint production between Johnson and Hamed's English promoter, Frank Warren.

In his first interview since obtaining his promoter's application in November, the 38-year-old Johnson explained his desire to become a major force in boxing promotion. As an indication of his lofty aspirations, he has put considerable thought into what he could do for Tyson, who is attempting to formally split with Don King.

"I would love to have Mike Tyson because Mike needs somebody like me," Johnson said, leaning his 6'9" frame back in a leather chair of a conference room of his offices in Beverly Hills, California. "First of all, Mike needs somebody to respect. He needs somebody to tell him, 'This is how you're going to have to do it, Mike. You can't do this, this, and this. You gotta do it like this.'

"He needs somebody he can look up to. That's what he needs. No matter what people think, boxing still needs Mike Tyson. But they need the right Mike Tyson. They don't need the old one; they need the new one."

Johnson claims he can correct the error of Tyson's ways and help erase the memories of his rape conviction and his ongoing suspension by the Nevada State Athletic Commission for biting Evander Holyfield on both ears last summer.

"Mike needs image control," Johnson said. "He needs status right now. He needs somebody to bring that back. First of all, you got to sit him down and say 'This is it. This is your last shot.' That's the number-one thing. Number two, we need the old Mike Tyson, fighting-wise. The real dedicated, stern Mike Tyson. Then we got to get him out so people can see him again. Then people feel good: 'Well, okay. The association with Magic can help him maybe.'"

Tyson is eligible for reinstatement July 5, but he must petition the NSAC. Johnson, however, is confident he can convert Tyson's bad-boy persona. If Tyson ever does return to the ring, his first fight is expected to eclipse all live gate and pay-per-view records.

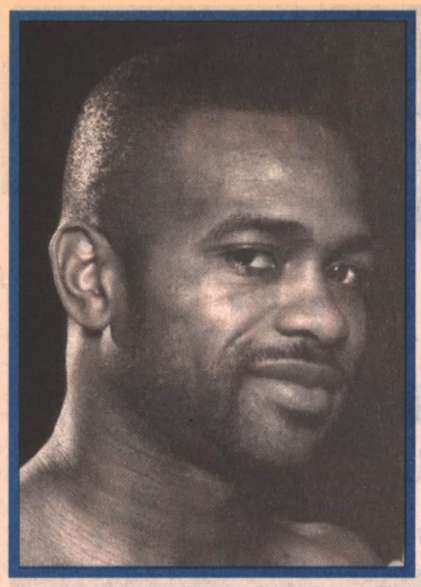
"You still don't have a lot of guys to replace him value-wise," Johnson said. "Let's be real about it, okay? Nobody is bigger than Mike Tyson. He's still the number-one box office draw."

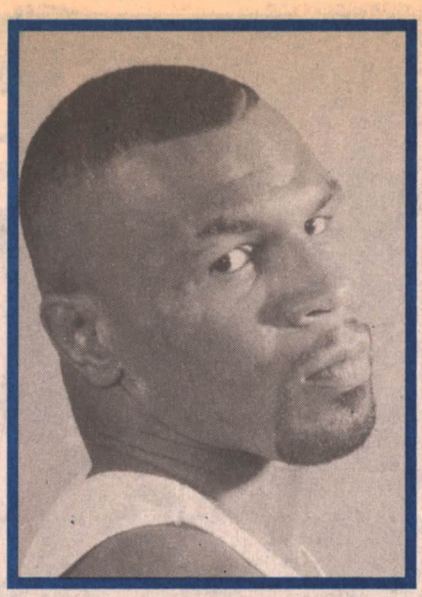
King did not return phone calls for this story, but Top Rank President Bob Arum was quick to convey his opinion that Johnson is just the man for Tyson's redemption.

"I have heard that Tyson wants to work with Magic," Arum said. "He would make an immediate impact. My God, how that would help the sport. People involved in the sport should be rooting for that.

"If Tyson goes before the Nevada Commission and says he's learned the error of his ways, that he has a new promoter in Magic Johnson, and says, 'He's the kind of person who is a role model for me,' I can't see the commission denying him a license."

Johnson decided to dive into the shark-infested waters of fight promotion because of his love for the sport, which dates back to his youth. And he can afford it. He pos-





Roy Jones and Mike Tyson are two big name fighters who have spoken with Johnson about the possibility of working with him. Being associated with Johnson would help Tyson's battered image.

sesses $56-million in real estate assets alone. Although Johnson's money and fame will propel his foray into boxing, his vice president and longtime friend, Darwin Payton, will carry the bulk of the responsibility for running the boxing operations. Payton is a former amateur boxer who was the team manager for the Michigan State basketball team that won the 1979 national title with Johnson as the star.

"I thought that boxing needed to go in another direction," Johnson said. "I didn't like the direction it's going in now. I think we can help that. I want to try to help fighters grow not only in their sport, but outside of their sport. They need to grow as men and learn how to handle their money a little bit better. Some of these guys come out of the game with nothing. You need somebody with vision. And that's what I'm going to bring to the table. I feel right now is the time."

Once Johnson submits his completed application to the NSAC, he must undergo an extensive background check, including FBI and Nevada Highway Patrol investigations, fingerprinting, and a review of his financial records. He then must appear before the five-member commission, which will decide his fate. Johnson's approval is considered academic.

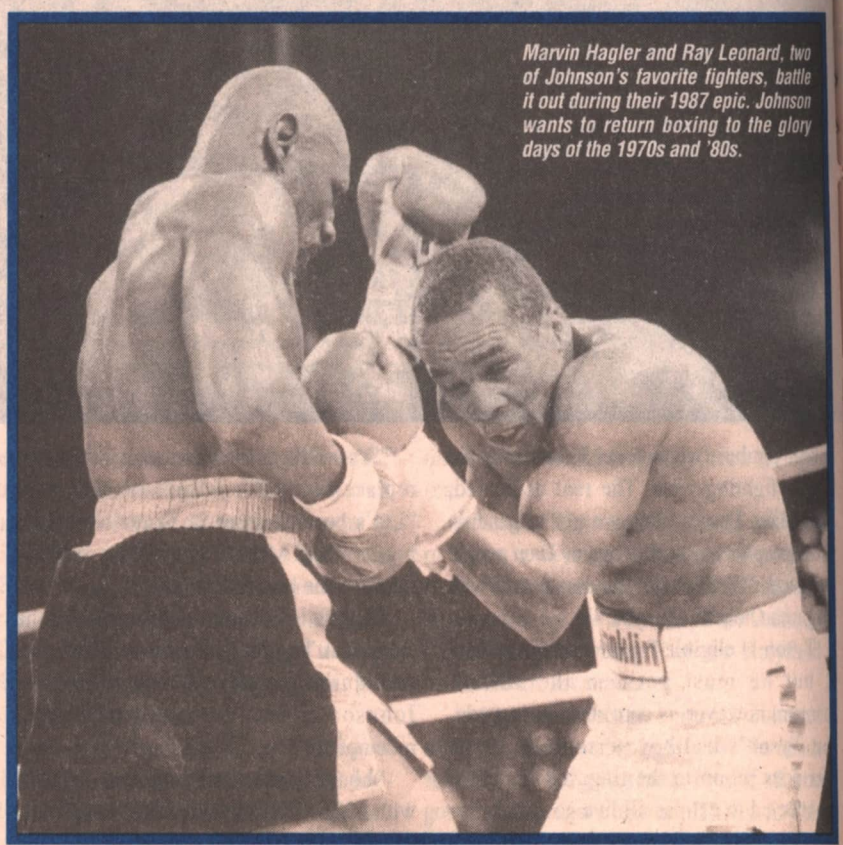
"When he first came to see me, it was probably the most enjoyable two hours I've spent with anybody," NSAC Executive Director Marc Ratner said. "The questions he asked were so good, so meaningful. He's getting in this to help fighters, to teach them about money and finances. He's not getting in this to exploit them."

Johnson was specific when asked his thoughts on aging boxers who continually come out of retirement. He stated he would refuse to promote such fighters, even if his boxing hero, Sugar Ray Leonard, approached him. "If one of them gets hurt," he said, "I couldn't live with that."

Johnson also noted he would refrain from working with HIV- or AIDS-infected fighters. Johnson tested positive for HIV in 1991 and has been a crusader for the cause ever since. He even attempted a controversial NBA comeback and caused a worldwide uproar for playing on the Olympic basketball "Dream Team" since testing positive. But he claimed boxing was different.

"I don't want to see the game damaged," Johnson said. "Studies have shown that no [HIV transmission] cases have ever happened—in basketball. But the problem in boxing is you're always rubbing up against each other; there's always somebody bleeding a lot, and a mixture could really happen. The worst thing would be if a guy got infected, it would be bad for the sport. We don't need anything else happening bad to the sport of boxing. Nothing. I love this sport. My thing is to help the image of the sport, help the sport grow and keep growing."

Even before he embarked on his legendary NBA career, Johnson was considered one of the most effervescent personalities in sports. With a classy demeanor and cherub's grin, it is nearly impossible to



Marvin Hagler and Ray Leonard, two of Johnson's favorite fighters, battle it out during their 1987 epic. Johnson wants to return boxing to the glory days of the 1970s and '80s.

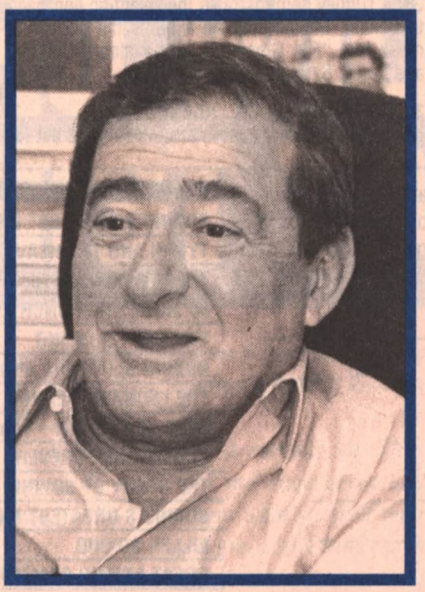
Johnson is counting on his popularity and highly visible profile to help push boxing to a new level. He intends to plug the sport on his new Fox TV show, The Magic Hour.

walk away from a Magic meeting with a negative impression. That type of personality can only help restore boxing's respectability.

"I know that Magic is a tremendous fight fan, and if he's going to seriously get into boxing, I think it will be good for the sport and good for him," Arum said. "Everybody loves Johnson, and rightly so. He'd be a terrific addition to boxing, and I think he'd be very successful. If he doesn't try to conquer the world in his first year, he'll be extremely successful. He's a very bright person. He inspires trust in people. We would give him any kind of assistance we could. If you have competition, you'd want your competition to come from somebody like Magic Johnson, who is a nice, respectable person, rather than some people in the business right now."

Johnson's main goal is to return boxing to its most recent glory days of the 1970s and '80s. He fondly recalls the fights of his favorites: Muhammad Ali, Larry Holmes, Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns, Alexis Arguello, and Leonard.

"We gotta get back to that," Johnson said. "We have to give fans a little bit more for their buck or we're going to lose them. The shows have got to be better, be on time a little bit better. And I think maybe add some stuff, too, some tricks we have planned. We don't want fans to start saying, 'They're not giving me my money's worth. The show's not good enough anymore.' You don't want that. You want to come away saying, 'That card was unbelievable.' The last two years I only made a few fights because of that, and I used to make all the fights."



Even though they would be competitors, the normally cantankerous Bob Arum says he thinks Johnson would be great for boxing and would do anything he can to help him.

The boxing days that Johnson fondly looks back upon coincided with the NBA's renaissance. Johnson and Larry Bird of the Boston Celtics are considered the founders of the new NBA. Johnson claims those pioneering days taught him a lesson in reinvention.

"Why did the NBA go from the doormat to being the second most popular sport next to football?" Johnson asked. "It's because of marketing. They market their guys better than anybody else. Here we got all these great commodities in boxing, but nobody knows them. We have to get them out there, get them in front of the camera, get people out there talking about them, which I will be doing. Every article you see now, I'm going to be talking about it.

"When I first came in, the NBA was at its low of lows. I see right now boxing is not at its low of lows, but it's not where it should be."

Exposure is the chief element in attaining a loftier status for the sport. Johnson will host *The Magic Hour* on Fox, which debuts June 8. He intends to use the show to market boxing, and not just his own fighters.

Johnson does not consider himself a competitor of the major promoters, such as Arum, King, and Dino Duva of Main Events. He prefers to be thought of as a colleague.

"Bob Arum is established. Don King is established," Johnson said. "What we want to do is just enhance the boxing game. And if we do that it's good for everybody.

"We want to bring more exposure to the game in a positive way. We want to bring more marketing to the game. The [other] promoters are great at what they do, but we're also going to be great at what we do. People have to understand something: I've been on both sides. I know business. That's what I know.

"We already have six or seven new sponsors that's we're going to bring to the game, sponsors who have never been in boxing before that are household names."

Johnson would not say which companies he has convinced to give boxing a chance. But the fact he was able to do so makes Arum happy.

"It would help the sport so much that the pie could get appreciably bigger," Arum said. "Even though [Top Rank] as a

(Continued on page 62)

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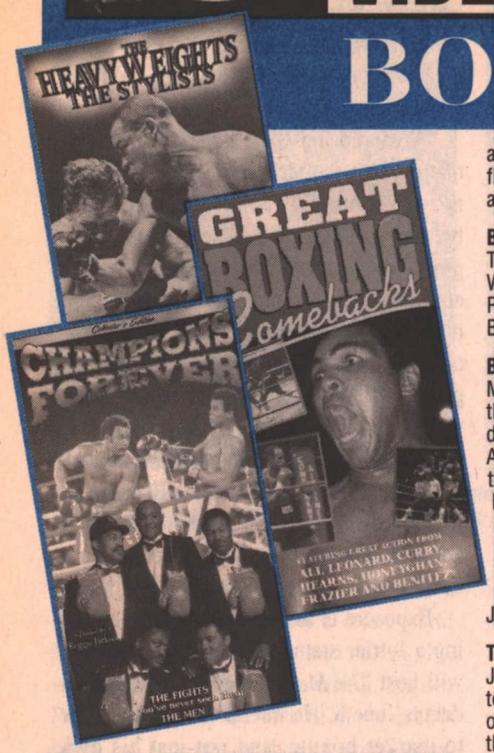

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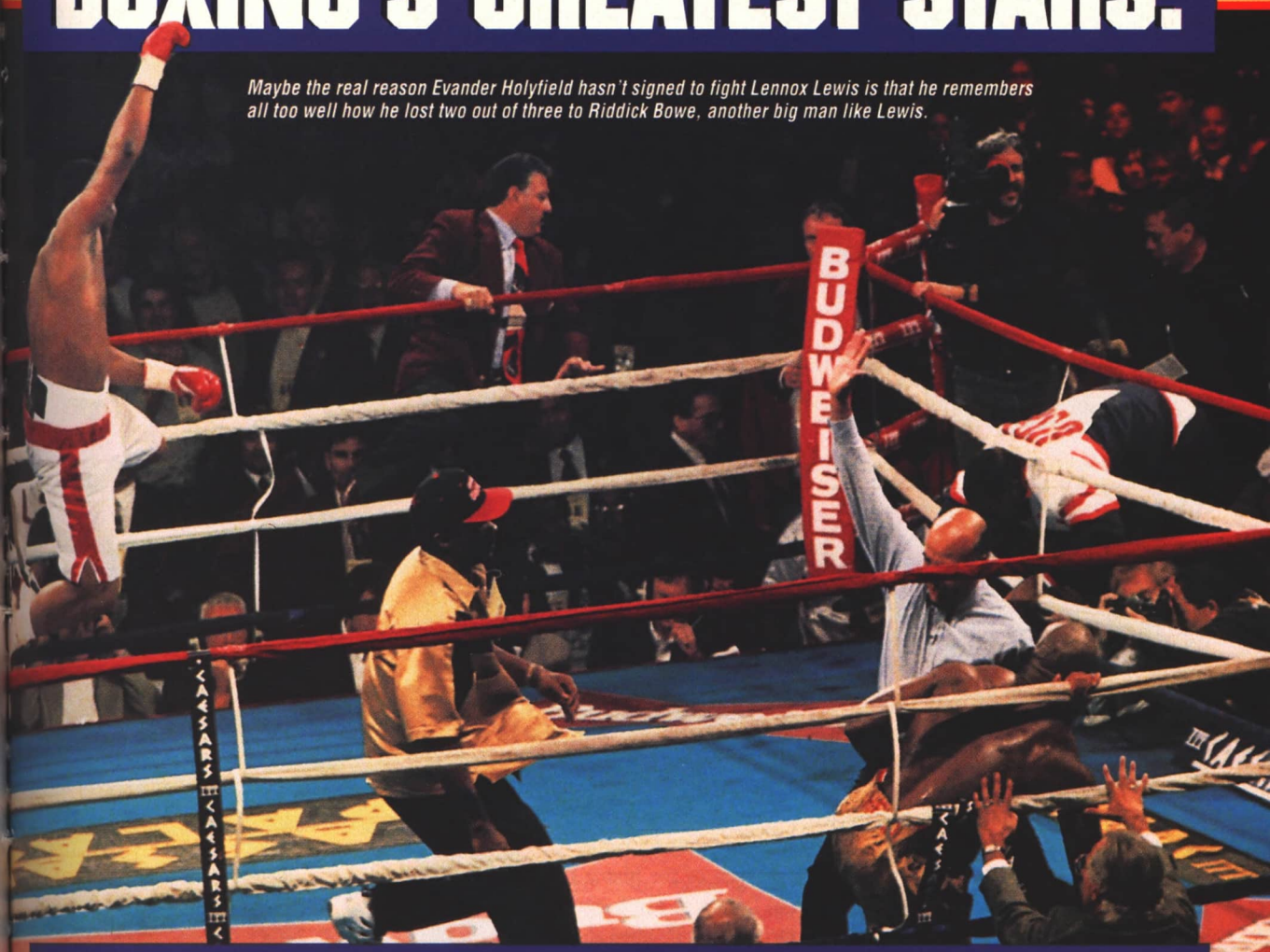


Maybe the real reason Evander Holyfield hasn't signed to fight Lennox Lewis is that he remembers all too well how he lost two out of three to Riddick Bowe, another big man like Lewis.

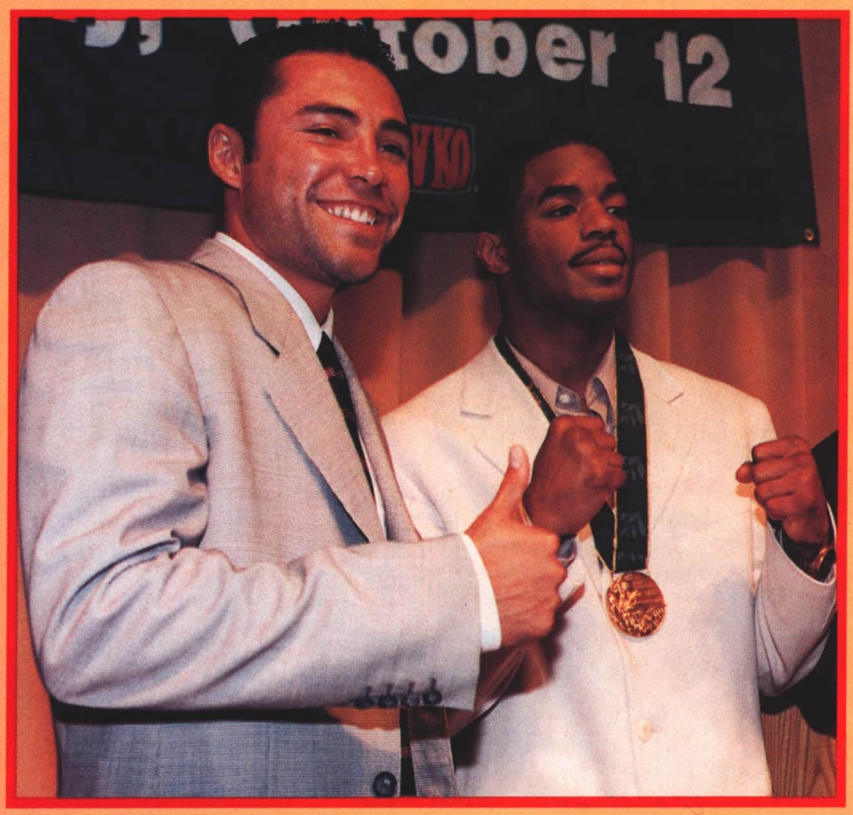
WHO WILL BE THE FIRST TO FALL?

By Bernard Fernandez

The late Rocky Marciano might or might not have been the greatest heavyweight champion of all-time, but he's on the short list of candidates for the designation. What is beyond dispute is that "The Rock," winner of all 49 of his professional bouts, went out on top, the sort of leave-taking too few of the really good ones care to replicate. Why quit when you can hang on for another payday or two or three, another couple of hours in the spotlight?

Boxing fans are a curious lot. They know the names of the once-great and want to see them strut what's left of their stuff. That's why there's still interest in fights involving the fraying remnants of Larry Holmes and Roberto Duran, not to mention golden oldies reunion tours by Frankie Avalon, Fabian, and Bobby Rydell. But those very same supporters have been known to turn on their old heroes for not delivering as much as they once did.

Today's headliners are, of course, tomorrow's has-beens. They face the same dilemmas that have forever bedeviled superstar attractions who stay too long at the fair. How can they maximize their prime time? What risks should they take? Or shouldn't? What career moves are in



Will fellow gold medalist David Reid be the man to hand Oscar De La Hoya his first defeat? Will it be Felix Trinidad? Or will "The Golden Boy" retire undefeated?

their best interests, as opposed to those of an increasingly skeptical and disinterested public?

THE RING examines the status—past, present, and, especially, future—of six of boxing's best performers and speculates as to who among them will be the first to fall from the top. For each of them, the road just ahead could be fraught with peril. But guess what. The more dangerous road is sometimes the most direct route to glory for boxing's most talented individuals. Our advice to Evander Holyfield, Oscar De La Hoya, Roy Jones, Felix Trinidad, Naseem Hamed, and Johnny Tapia: Go for the wild ride while you can, or find the off-ramp and spare everyone the aggravation of an endless trip in the slow lane.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD

Commander Vander used to be easy to read. He took on the toughest opponents, was well-paid for doing it, and more often than not bested them with his skill and his will. He was a shining example of everything a true champion should be. Holyfield is still the sort of person a parent might feel comfortable allowing his child to emulate, but, strictly as a prize fighter, you have to wonder if he remains the shining warrior who lives only for battle.

Much of the blame for the failure to reach agreement on a unification showdown between Holyfield, the WBA/IBF heavyweight champion, and WBC titlist Lennox Lewis must be laid at Holyfield's feet. He surely understands by now that his exciting pay-per-view conquest of then-IBF champ Michael Moorer resulted in a $10-million loss to SET, which, the last time we checked, is not in business to lose money. He also surely must understand that the combined purses being sought by himself and Lewis made it a virtual certainty that a PPV matchup of the two premium-priced fighters also would be liberally splashed with red ink.

Lewis, an Englishman who is big and dangerous in the ring, if not necessarily as large and imposing with the American public, was willing to scale back his asking price a bit to make the fight more economically feasible for its backers. A similar gesture by Holyfield likely would have prompted all involved to bite the bullet and give the project a green light.

But Holyfield—who in the past has said he is more interested in reunifying the title than filthy lucre—passed on a chance to do so because, he said, he was not about to break a sweat for a mere $18-million or so. Boxing's gleaming crusader, who had professed to be on a quest for the Holy Grail, now was cast as just another conscienceless bounty hunter.

Furthermore, Holyfield's inflexible financial demands seem in stark contrast to his search for any opponent not named Lennox Lewis. How do you reconcile a situation in which Holyfield insists he will not fight *anyone* for less than $20-million, then talks about swapping punches with Frans Botha or Henry Akinwande? It is, as they say, an enigma wrapped inside a riddle.

Holyfield recently was beseeched by South African President Nelson Mandela, one of his heroes, to defend the WBA and IBF titles against South Africa's Botha in that country. It would be another "Rumble In The Jungle," so to speak, and a fight

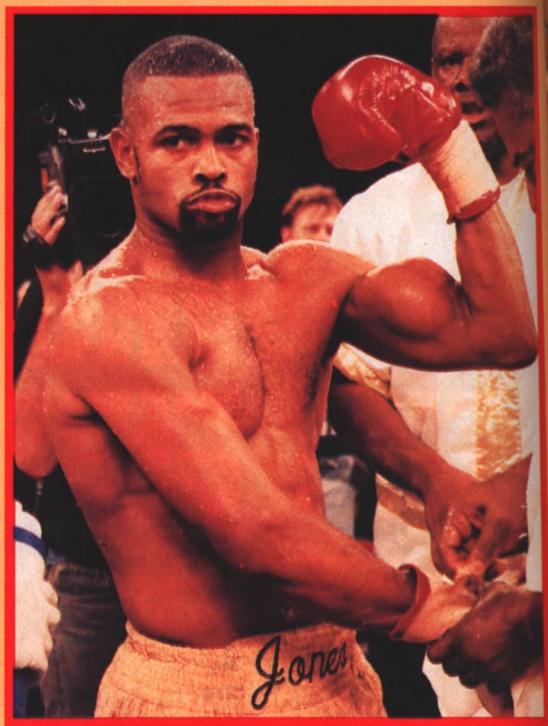


Photo by Jay Lash

Jones has every physical asset to be an all-time great, but there's also a possibility his lack of love for the game will stunt his growth.

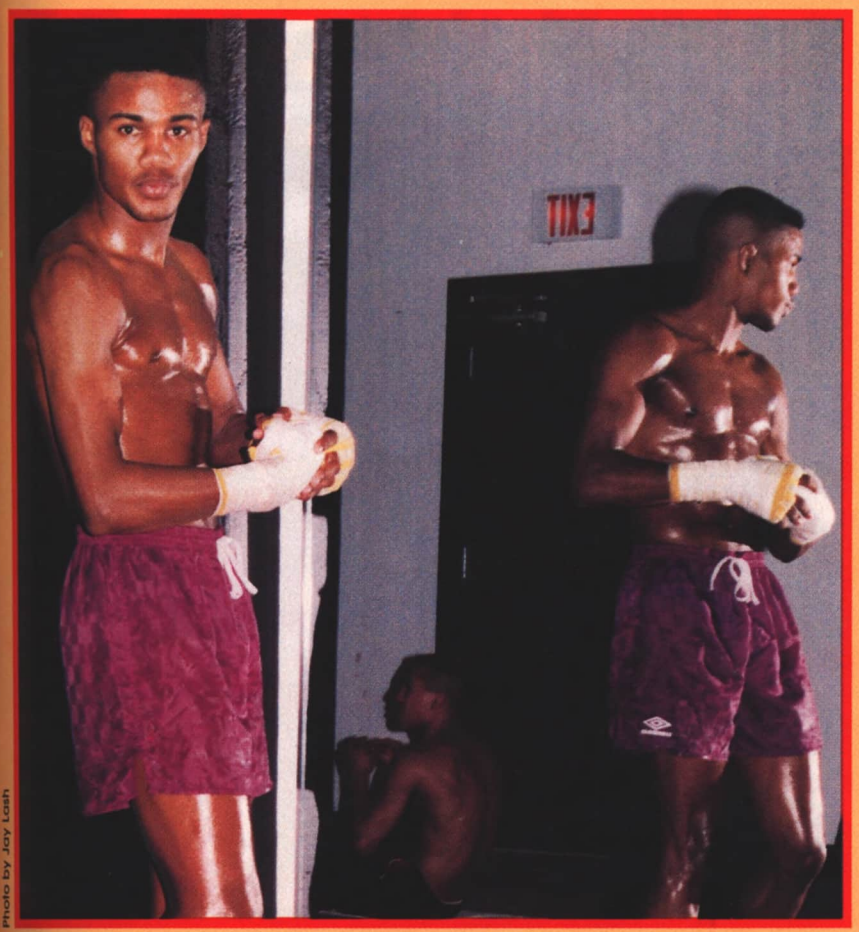


Photo by Jay Lash

Flexing his muscles in the mirror won't get IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad into the Hall of Fame. Currently, the mutlitalented Puerto Rican's career is stagnating.

with enormous political implications—Botha is white—in a nation so long gripped by racial strife. But from a purely boxing standpoint, Holyfield vs. Botha has no appeal whatsoever. Botha should have to purchase a ticket before being allowed to enter the same arena in which Holyfield is appearing.

A bout with Akinwande, of course, makes absolutely no sense other than the fact that Akinwande, who hugged his way through five excruciatingly dull rounds with Lewis, somehow has managed to get himself named the WBA's number-one contender. Got to take care of those mandatories, you know.

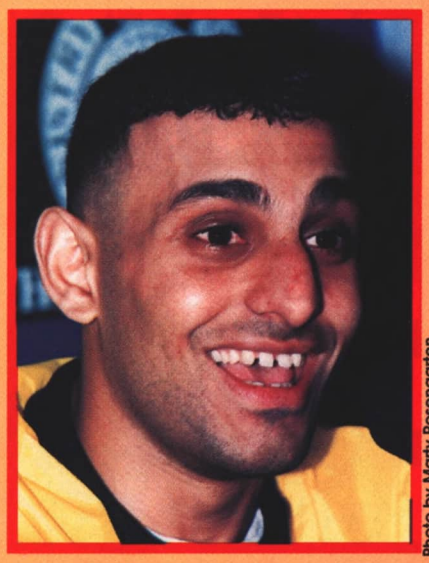


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Naseem Hamed laughs at the idea that he can be beaten, but his close call against Kevin Kelley in his American debut indicated that the concept isn't all that farfetched.

If Akinwande had six identical siblings, like those McCoy septuplets, Holyfield couldn't command $20-million for knocking them all out on the same night. So he's obviously willing to accept chump change, maybe $5-mill, for taking care of the paperwork. Wouldn't a truly meaningful go at Lewis, for a lot more cash, have made more sense?

You have the questions, we try to supply the answers. Here's a hypothesis that seemingly is grounded in logic: Holyfield, still much of what he was, is 35 and is worried that one day he'll wake up and be a lot older and less competitive than he was when he went to bed the night before. Commander Vander has been in scads of debilitating wars, perhaps too many, and he has a history of encountering trouble in the form of much larger men (see the three-fight series with Riddick Bowe). Against Lewis, he'd be giving away three years, four inches, and maybe 30 pounds. If Holyfield suspects, along with the rest of us, that Lewis would pose problems for him, he'd be right.

Ducking Lewis, perhaps at the urging of promoter Don King, enables Holyfield to pick up a quick, painless score or two against the non-threatening likes of Botha

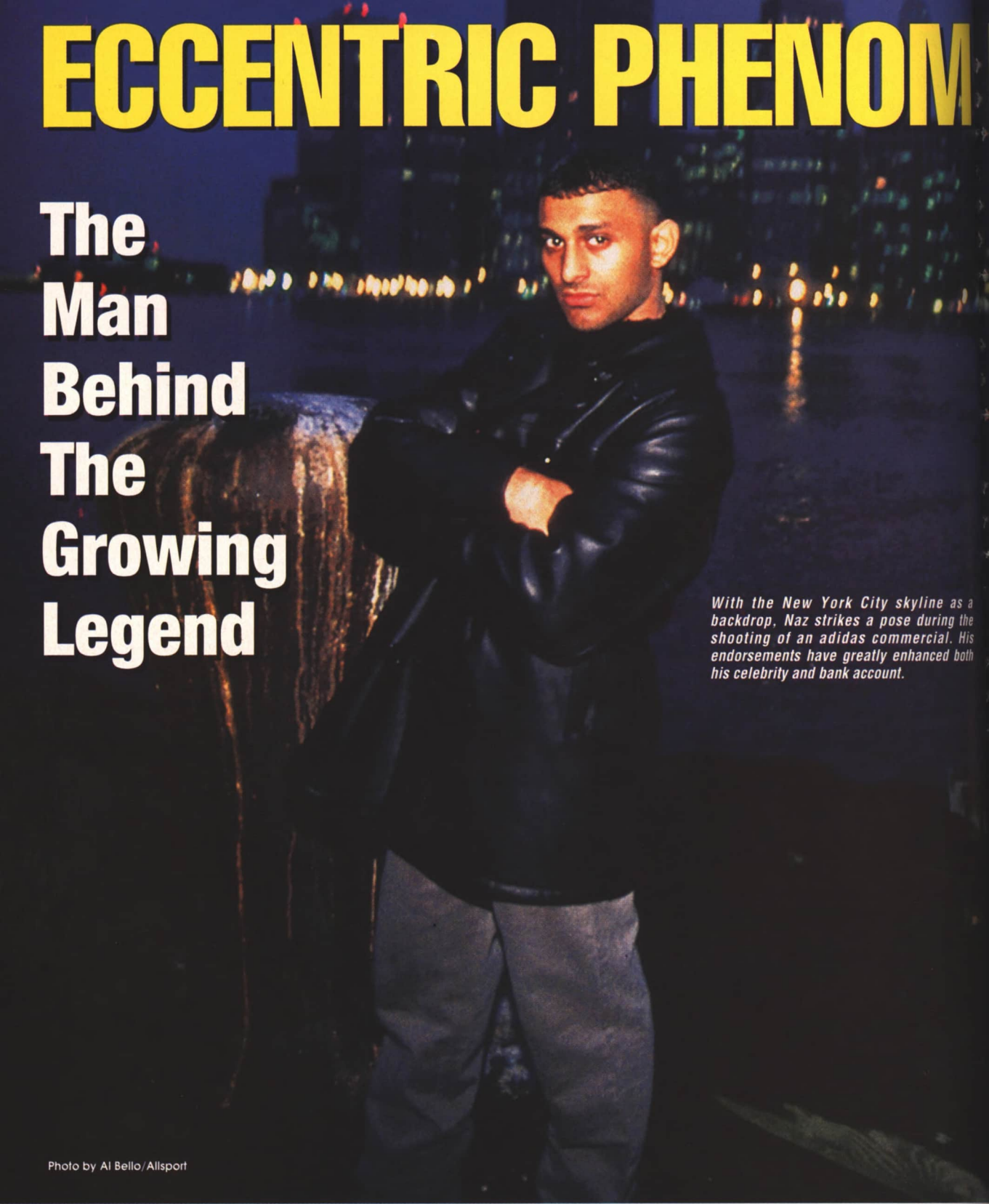
(Continued on page 56)

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Johnny Tapia had few problems with Ivan Alvarez en route to an eighth-round TKO. A match with IBF flyweight champ Mark Johnson, however, would be far more dangerous.

ECCENTRIC PHENOM

The Man Behind The Growing Legend



With the New York City skyline as a backdrop, Naz strikes a pose during the shooting of an adidas commercial. His endorsements have greatly enhanced both his celebrity and bank account.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

By Brian Doogan

The dressing room scene is reminiscent of the Spice Girls warming up for a Las Vegas show. Singing. Dancing. Giggling. Fooling around. Hiding pairs of shorts. Hiding gloves. Wondering whose turn it is to take center stage on the dance floor. This is certainly not Joe Louis about to step into the ring at Yankee Stadium. Hell, it's not even Muhammad Ali preparing for a public workout.

This is the artist currently known as Prince—surrounded by an entourage that would rival Louis' and Ali's combined—contemptuously getting ready for the next conflict on his journey through fistic virtuosity. It is hardly the context in which we

NASEEM HAMED

Photo by Mark Thompson/Allsport

Hamed's elaborate ring walks are an extention of his self-absorbed personality. He loves to be the center of attention.

Photo by Brent Cook

Chug-a-lug. "The Prince" swills down a bottle of designer water while being interviewed by THE RING during a visit to California in 1997.

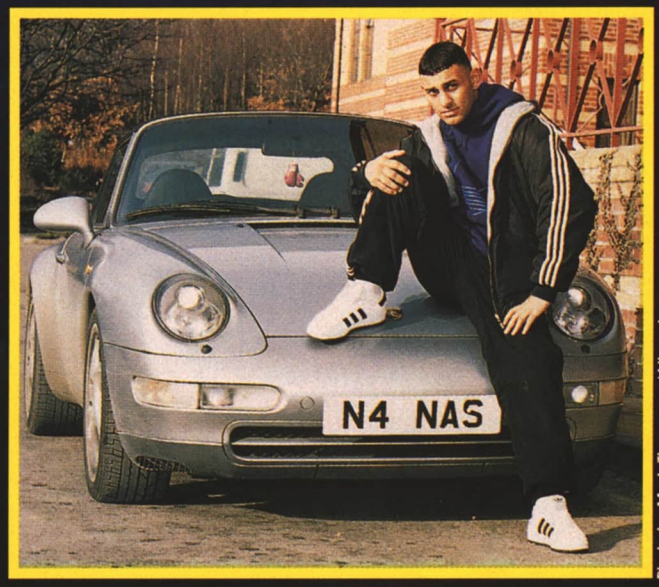


Photo by Mark Thompson/Allsport

Hamed loves fast cars, but when he was fined for speeding in March, he raffled off his Porsche to fan club members.

might imagine our heroes in red gloves in the final hour before a fight. But that's all right because Naseem Hamed doesn't give a damn.

If he reflects unorthodoxy once inside the ropes, then his life and habits are no less unconventional on the outside. He can be hanging out with the guys in Wincobank on the outskirts of Sheffield one minute and in audience with the president of Yemen the next, and be equally relaxed in either situation. He can praise Allah and spend hours explaining how Islam is so central to his life, then impulsively marry his girlfriend, an attractive 22-year-old of a different race and creed, completely unbeknownst to the family

(Continued on page 58)

CHAVEZ-GONZALEZ, LOPEZ-ALVAREZ

(And A Lot Of Loco From The Locals)

LET'S DO IT AGAIN— BUT NOT IN MEXICO

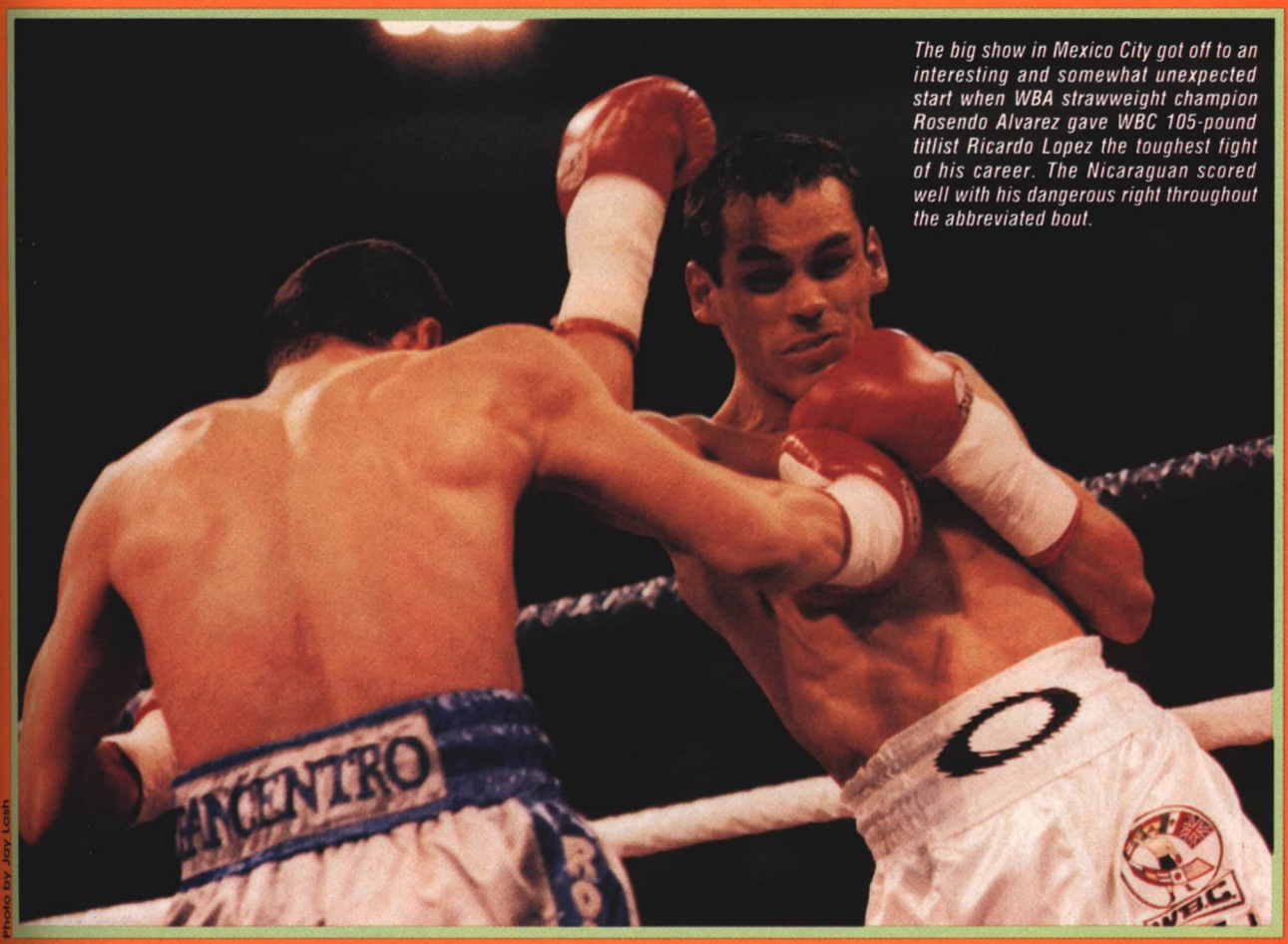
Photo by Holly Stein

Despite the craziness that surrounded it, the Julio Cesar Chavez and Miguel Angel Gonzalez bout was closely contested, and the draw verdict a reasonable reflection of the fight. A rematch for the still-vacant WBC super lightweight title is set for June.

By William Dettloff

Professional prize fighting has long had the reputation of being the most bizarre and eccentric of any of the major sports in the world.

Take your pick as to the reasoning: the politics, the corrupt governing bodies, the nonsense that's inherent in the ratings and promotion, the inexplicable decisions, the freak-show cast of participants that includes everyone from the truly villainous to the truly heroic. Both in and out of the ring, the game provides snapshot moments of indescribable human drama at its best and at its worst. If you saw the conclusion of Bowe-Golota I, Benn-McClellan, Holyfield-Tyson (first or sec-



The big show in Mexico City got off to an interesting and somewhat unexpected start when WBA strawweight champion Rosendo Alvarez gave WBC 105-pound titlist Ricardo Lopez the toughest fight of his career. The Nicaraguan scored well with his dangerous right throughout the abbreviated bout.

Photo by Joy Losh

ond), or countless other moments, you know that for better or worse, boxing is indeed, as HBO analyst Larry Merchant has called it, "the theater of the unexpected." We know this going in. We know it and expect it and, hell, we're peeved if it's anything less.

Still, how could we have been prepared for what went down in Mexico City on the seventh day of March? And we don't necessarily mean what happened in the ring, because in comparison to everything else, the fights themselves—Ricardo Lopez against Rosendo Alvarez to unify two-thirds of the strawweight crown and Julio Cesar Chavez against Miguel Angel Gonzalez for the vacant WBC super lightweight title—were, while exciting enough and fairly surprising in their outcomes, relatively mundane.

The circus didn't start with the scoring that was handled as though some boxing officials had suddenly come into possession of international biological warfare data and thus held the fate of the world's industrialized nations in their hands; it didn't start when both bouts ended in draws; it didn't start with the behavior of some drunken, ill-mannered fans who gave the event the feel and smell of a larger-than-life cockfight; it didn't begin with the mugging of Don King and several of his associates on a Mexico City street corner the week before the bout; and it didn't begin with the officials of the city deciding to invoke a 40-year-old law that prohibits women from boxing.

That Christy Martin's bout was scratched from the undercard at the last moment despite a plea from Dapper Don himself was evidence of the significance of the event to the people in charge in relation to where it took place, and of the strange turns that would occur before, during, and after. Each of those occurrences, on their own, would have been enough to rate this production as one of the more bizarre cards in recent memory. But really, the fun began back in October when Chavez first pulled out of this bout with claims of an elbow injury that required surgery. What exactly was the injury and how did it happen? The answer changed almost daily. First he fell on it while doing roadwork. Then he injured it while sparring.

The delay had nothing to do with the sad mess that had become Chavez' personal life since he slipped from the top, nothing to do with his divorce, the bitter custody dispute over his children, the alleged tax problems, the rumors about excessive drinking. Regardless of the reasons, went the press releases, the fight's off and that's that (and ignore that man behind the curtain). And who was conducting the press conferences and corralling the media? Jose Sulaiman. Not King, not Chavez, not his manager of the week, but the president of the WBC.

This doesn't mean that the injury wasn't real, of course, nor does it validate the long-held belief by some that King, Sulaiman, and Chavez are routinely mistaken in some of Mexico's more remote quarters for The Three Musketeers. But it did set in motion for many that queasy feeling one could be excused for getting

Photo by Jay Lash

Showtime's Ferdie Pacheco interviews Alvarez as Lopez nurses the fight-stopping cut over his right eye. Although Alvarez decked the Mexican hero in the second, after an accidental headbutt in the seventh, he had to settle for a technical draw.

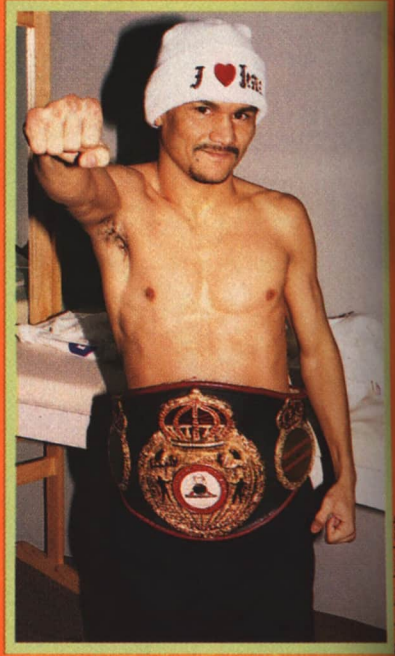


Photo by Jay Lash

The man from Managua: Pretty much unknown to American fight fans prior to his bout with Lopez, WBA champ Alvarez emerged as a genuine threat to the Mexican's dominance at 105 pounds.

Photo by Jay Lash

Chavez, surrounded by his entourage, entered the ring for his bout with Gonzalez with a stoic look on his face. The 35-year-old Mexican icon and former three-division champion may have slowed some, but he's still his country's number-one sports hero.

Photo by Holly Stein

In the trenches: Both men fought well, if not spectacularly. Gonzalez seemed a mite too respectful, and Chavez was only able to turn back the calendar for short spurts.

when confronted with the possibility that all was not well in Culiacan, that the once-great Chavez was spiraling downward at a rate even faster than many had thought.

The night arrived nonetheless, eventually, and so did the madness. It didn't matter to the 50,000-plus attendees in the Plaza de Toros that the great Lopez was in the co-feature facing his toughest challenge against Nicaragua's Alvarez for the WBC and WBA 105-pound championships; the ring was littered on-and-off with flying debris throughout the fight, which also, of course, featured its own bizarre action and conclusion.

Did anyone really think, for example, that we would ever see Lopez, 46-0-1 (35), on the seat of his pants, which is where a perfectly timed Alvarez right hand deposited him in the second round? And despite his solid credentials, did anyone really believe that Alvarez, 24-0-1 (16), was strong enough, skilled enough, and good enough to take the best shots "El Finito" could offer and keep coming? If anyone did at all, you can be sure it was Alvarez, who walked to Lopez from the opening bell and pushed him like no one had before.

(Continued on page 59)

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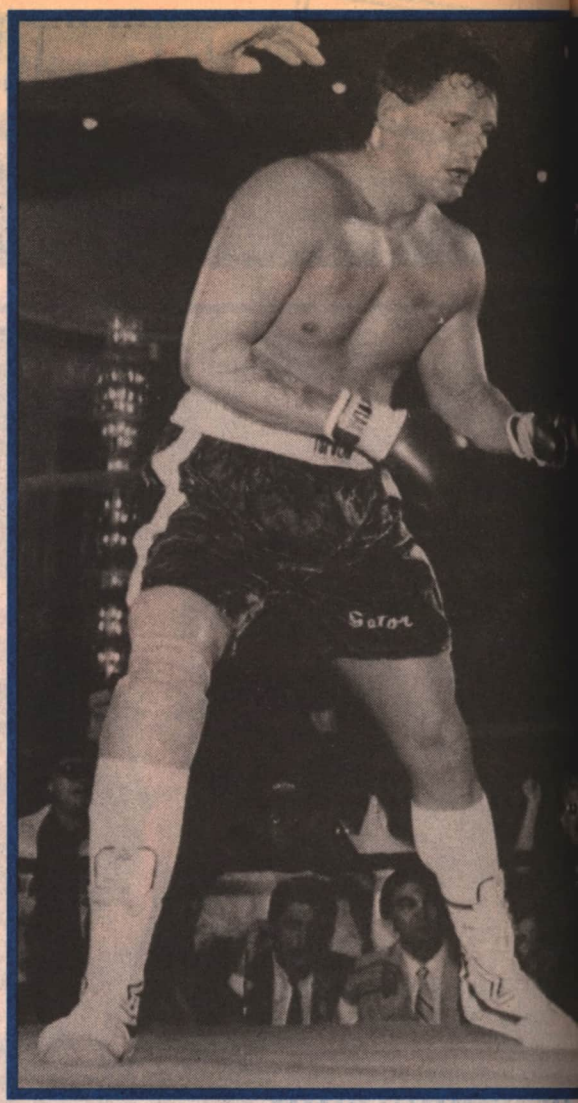
THIS SPORT DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE HANDICAPPED!



By Pete Ehrmann

To many who followed golf's Casey Martin trial, the sandtrap hit into by the Professional Golf Association when it sought to prevent the physically handicapped Martin from using a cart in Tour events became a yawning sinkhole when the PGA moguls argued that motoring around the course would detract from the "athleticism" of their sport.

While golf is unquestionably a game of skill, the athleticism involved is not exactly, as several have pointed out, as plain as the gut hanging over Craig Stadler's belt. It is essentially bowling with more steps and a tan. And while the judge ruled in favor of Martin, who suffers from a severe circulatory problem in one of his legs that, according to his physician, could worsen under the stress of walking, golf's stand against him put the so-called egalitarian game of Nicklaus, Palmer, and Hogan several strokes behind uncivilized boxing as a haven for the physically handicapped as well as the physically fit.

Emphatically siding with the judge and Martin was a Chicago tattoo artist who, by the time you read this, hopes to resume chasing his dream of glory in the ring as fast as his one leg will carry him.

"What the heck, let the kid do it," said Craig "Gator" Bodzianowski. "Golf is just hitting the ball."

Likewise, boxing is just hitting the other guy, and since it was his right foot and ankle that were amputated in 1984, Bodzianowski figured he still had all the body parts necessary to pick up right where he had left off as a 13-0 cruiserweight boxer.

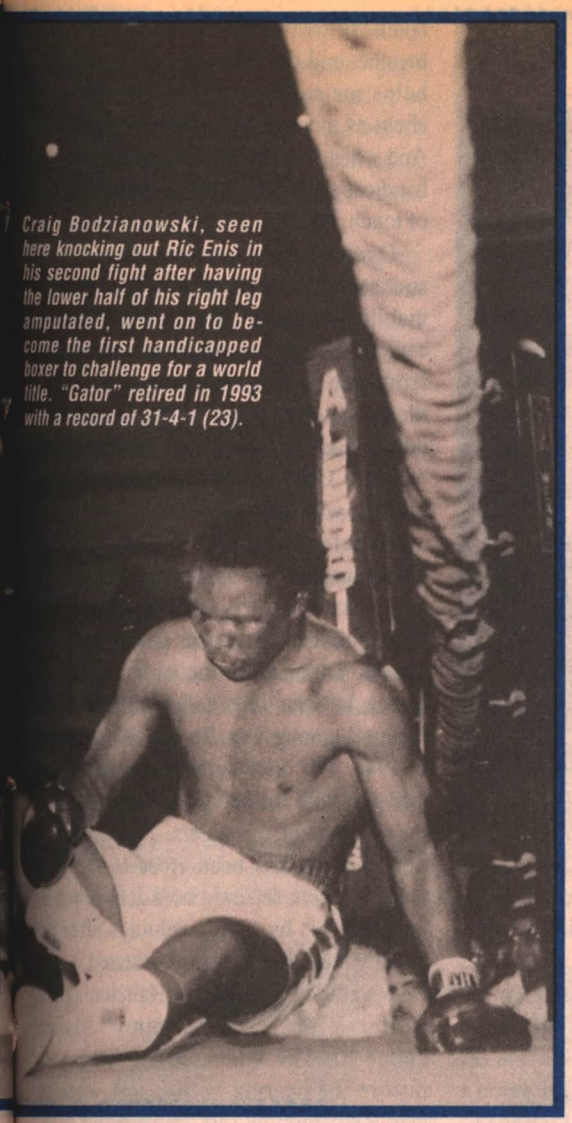
Bodzianowski, now 36, was involved in a motorcycle accident that left the lower part of his leg hanging by a thread. Doctors gave him two choices: They could try to reattach the severed portion, which would entail a succession of delicate surgeries that might not be successful, or they could amputate immediately. In either case, they said, Bodzianowski would never box again.

His reply made headlines: "Adios, cut if off. And yes, I will box again."

It took almost four months to fit him with a prosthesis on account of the surgical scar that ran almost to his knee. In the meantime, Bodzianowski ran two miles every day on his crutches. "I'd hop and hit the crutches, hop, and hit the crutches," he said. A year after his injury, he was back sparring in the gym.

"I didn't have the mobility I used to have," he said, "but it didn't matter. I wasn't a fancy dan anyway. I was a straight-up fighter."

But the Illinois Athletic Commission had doubts about letting a one-legged man in the ring, and vociferously supporting that view was Ferdie Pacheco, the well-known "Fight Doctor." Pacheco said that if Bodzianowski was allowed to fight and got hurt, there would not only be a cry for box-



Craig Bodzianowski, seen here knocking out Ric Enis in his second fight after having the lower half of his right leg amputated, went on to become the first handicapped boxer to challenge for a world title. "Gator" retired in 1993 with a record of 31-4-1 (23).

Even though he received a blessing from Pope John Paul II at Vadican City in 1986 (above), there were many boxing people, including Dr. Fredie Pacheco (right), who did not want the one-legged fighter to box.

ing's abolition, but that he might be inclined to send up the first howl.

Like Martin, Bodzianowski ended up hiring an attorney. The commission finally relented after sending a doctor—not Pacheco—to watch him spar. "He's fighting with his hands, not his feet," reported the sawbones.

Not only did Bodzianowski have another 20 or so bouts, but on July 19, 1990, he became the first boxer handicapped by more than just an inability to fight very well to try for a world title. He lost a 12-round decision to then-WBA cruiserweight champion Robert Daniels in the Kingdome in Seattle, Washington.

By the way, Bodzianowski wasn't worried about a mechanical breakdown in the ring. "I didn't want it to break in the ring," he said of his artificial right limb, so "I'd jump off the garage roof just to test the prosthesis."

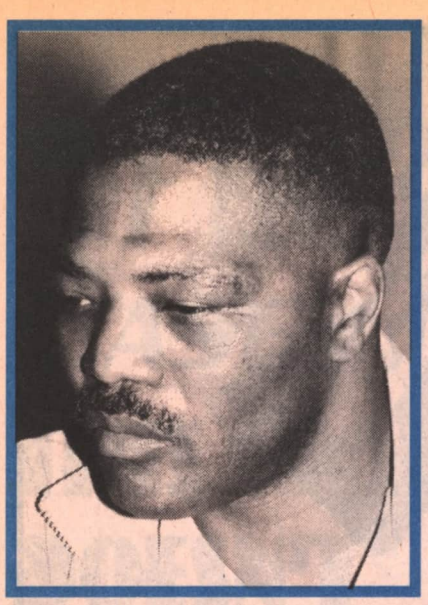
Just a few months before Gator's history-making championship bout, a lot of boxing commissioners and writers were wondering what kind of fall the people in charge of superintending boxing in the State of Wisconsin had taken—or what planet they had jumped off—when they approved the comeback of former world junior welterweight champion Aaron Pryor.

Pryor's handicap was that he was legally blind in his left eye, thanks to the combination of a detached retina and a cataract that had caused the commissions in New York, New Jersey, and Nevada, where the also cocaine-addicted ex-champion had first applied for a license to resume his Hall of Fame career, to deny him.

But in what one columnist called a classic "definition of misguided liberalism," in Wisconsin, where boxing is overseen by the regulatory agency that also sets the legal standards for hearing-aid salesmen, funeral homes, and hair-dressers, Pryor's condition was ruled, to quote one newspaper article, "a disability, not a medical problem." And according to the head of the Department of Regulation and Licensing, "state law forbids state agencies that issue professional licenses from discriminating against anyone with a disability."

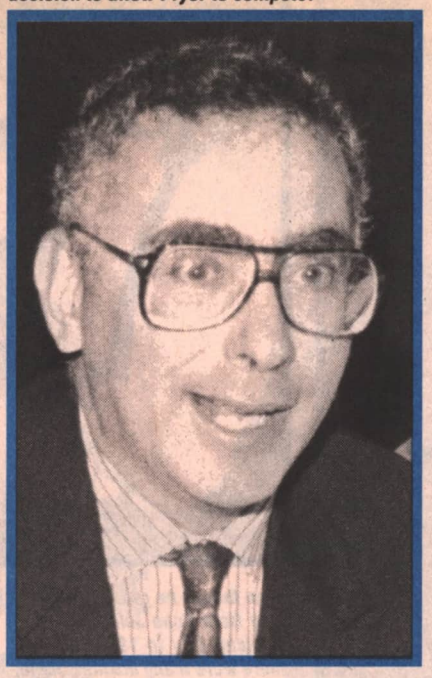
The resulting uproar made Pryor's fight in Madison, the state capital, on May 16, 1990, the focus of not only the boxing world, but all of sports. "It's so ludicrous," said then-Nevada boxing commissioner Chuck Minker. "If [Pryor] has one arm, he's handicapped. Would you allow him to fight? We're talking about boxing. Doesn't health and safety supersede discrimination in this case? This defies logic."

Before entering the ring, Pryor had to sign a statement acknowledging that "I will be taking a great risk when I box because of the condition of my eyes ... I could lose sight in one or both of my eyes. I know also that because of poor vision I



Former junior welterweight champion Aaron Pryor fought a pair of comeback fights in 1990 despite being legally blind in his left eye. The decision made in Wisconsin to allow "The Hawk" to return to the ring caused an outrage among those who felt the health and safety risks were too great to be ignored.

Then-Nevada boxing commissioner Chuck Minker spoke out against allowing Pryor to fight, but was unable to influence Wisconsin's decision to allow Pryor to compete.



could receive strong blows to my head and suffer head and brain damage. I could even be killed." But all the hand-wringing turned out to be for naught. Pryor could have fought blindfolded and would have been in no danger of any of that happening, because the opponent turned out to be Daryl Jones, a loyal friend from Cincinnati who gently exited in the third round.

It's a good thing Chuck Minker wasn't in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 28, 1947, and Somersby Dowst probably wishes he had never showed up himself. Dowst wasn't handicapped entering the ring to fight for the Harvard University 155-pound championship, but afterward he had to live with the potentially crippling embarrassment of having been knocked out by a one-armed man.

His opponent, Thomas Rodgers of Pittsburgh, a Harvard junior, had lost his left arm in a train accident five years earlier. Nevertheless, Rogers knocked Dowst down twice to force a stoppage in the second round of the widely reported fight.

Bodzianowski wasn't the first one-legged fighter in the ring, and he never fought a blind opponent, either. Just such a match occurred on January 2, 1927, in Brighton, England, and even though it was only an exhibition for charity, it made the front page of the *New York Times* when Capt. Gerald Lowry and Maj. Mickey Leahy of His Majesty's army went at it. Lowry had lost his sight in World War I, and Leahy a leg. Not surprisingly, their bout was called a draw.

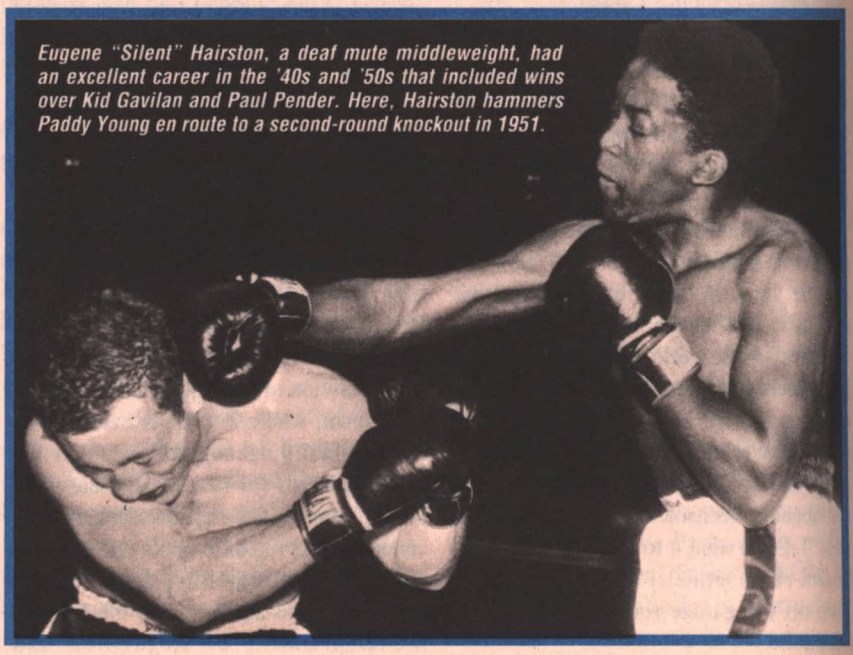
Lowry considered his blindness more than compensated for by other gifts in the ring. "A man blinded, as I was, straight off and not by a gradual disease can develop a sort of sixth sense," he said. "It seems to be partly acute hearing, partly acute sensitiveness to touch. My opponent must breathe, and that tells me where he is and helps me to guess what he is thinking about as much as if I could watch his eye. And when it comes to in-fighting, I am not handicapped at all. With my superior sense of touch, I believe I have an advantage."

Over the years, several boxers have succeeded in spite of deafness and the inability to speak. In the late-1940s and early-'50s, Eugene Hairston, a deaf mute from the Bronx, became a top middleweight contender, defeating, among others in his 63-bout career, world champions Kid Gavilan and Paul Pender, and drawing with Jake LaMotta.

Undefeated in his first 13 pro fights after going 60-1 as an amateur, Hairston—who, like similarly afflicted boxers in those politically incorrect times, was nicknamed "Dummy" in the early days of his career, but was later called "Silent"—was featured among THE RING's "New Faces" in 1948. The brief writeup seemed to suggest that with his handicap he was safer in the ring than on the streets.

"Hairston has been close to the grim reaper on five separate occasions when he has been hit by motor vehicles after not hearing the drivers' horns," it stated.

Several decades before Hairston's time, welterweight Fred "Dummy" Mahon ended his life when, in an attempt to restore the hearing he had lost when he was eight months old, jumped out of an airplane 5,000 feet over San Francisco.



Eugene "Silent" Hairston, a deaf mute middleweight, had an excellent career in the '40s and '50s that included wins over Kid Gavilan and Paul Pender. Here, Hairston hammers Paddy Young en route to a second-round knockout in 1951.

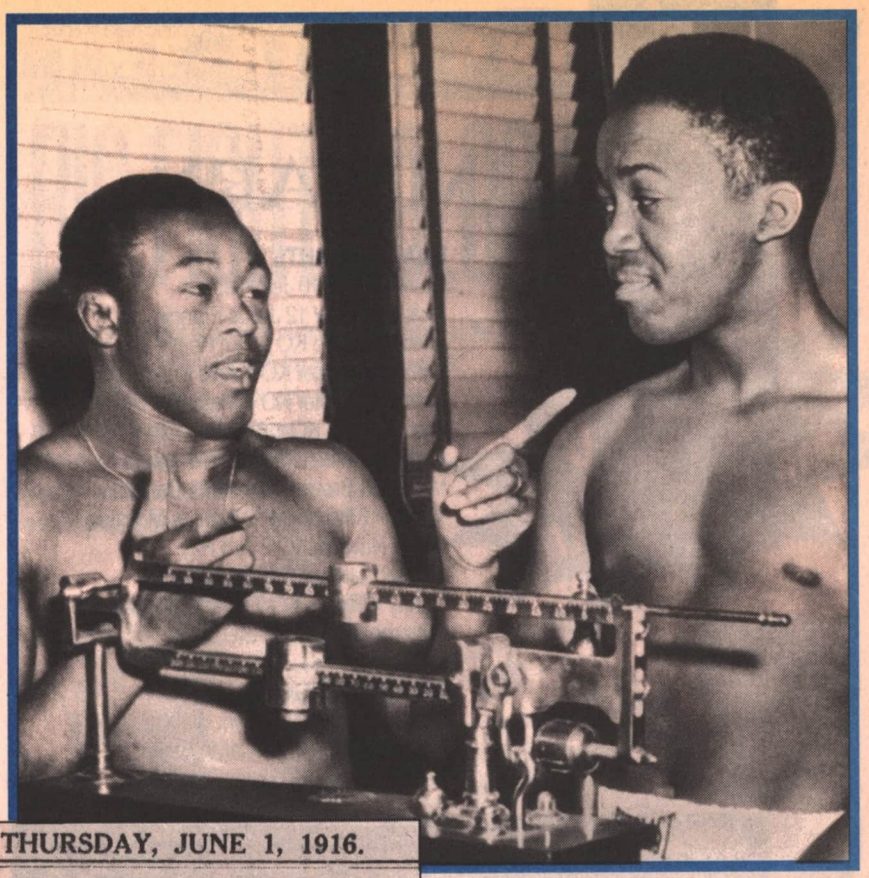
Mahon hoped that by rapidly experiencing a change in altitude, his ears would "pop" open. He had tried a similar jump earlier in Los Angeles with no success, and before he climbed into the airplane in 'Frisco, Mahon's manager, Fred Windsor, begged him to forget about it.

With a crowd of thousands looking on, the veteran of over 100 fights jumped out of the plane on February 23, 1930, and according to press accounts, pulled the rip-cord of his new-fangled parachute too soon. Only the pilot chute opened, and it was shredded by the underside of the plane.

"He would have been the next welter-weight champion," sobbed Windsor after Mahon fell to the earth and, upon impact, left it.

Just a cursory check of the voluminous files of the pre-1920 boxers in the library of boxing historian Bill Schutte disclosed several boxers who battled through daunting physical impediments.

In the letter to the *Police Gazette* published in July, 1904, a deaf boxer called "Dummy" Rowan, from LaGrande, Oregon—described as "the undefeated middleweight of the Northwest"—disputed "the claim of one Fred Wall that he is the deaf mute champion boxer, and states that he is ready to meet Wall for a side bet of $500. Rowan claims the title of champion and is anxious to have the question of supremacy settled."



At least Hairston didn't have to listen to Kid Gavilan run his mouth at the weigh-in for their 1951 bout in Madison Square Garden. The deaf fighter had beaten the future welterweight champ the year before, but lost the rematch.

Whether that epochal event ever occurred isn't known; nor, for that matter, does history record whether "Dummy" was even the champion deaf mute boxer in the Rowan family. For he had a brother who was also a deaf mute fighter, called "Silent Rowan."

In reporting this "coincidence in pugilism," the *Gazette* explained how deaf fighters followed the referee's count. "These fellows are very alert and the vibration is as distinct to them as is sound to a person with two good ears. Before entering

(Continued on page 63)

THE BELOIT DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1916.

WILLIE HOPPE BACK IN GAME IN SPITE OF INJURIES.

Willie Hoppe and the hands he is fighting with to lift mortgage off his prune ranch.

BY M. C. LARKIN.
(Staff Correspondent)

Los Angeles, Cal., May 31.—The ...ppiest little boxer that ever ...s on a glove is Willie Hoppe, ...g of the Four Round Game. Willie ...erves more credit than any fighter, ...t or present, because when he en-...s a bout it is under a heavier hand-...p than any other knight of the ...ensbury rules.

"Three years ago when this sturdy ...le boxer was at the height of his ...er in San Francisco he had most ...both hands blown off, while at-...pting to shoot a toy cannon just ...re the Fourth ... Despit... he lost ...

In a battle in this city recently with Steve Dalton, champion of Southern California, he put up four rounds of the prettiest fighting ever viewed by a capacity crowd of fight fans.

"I can still punch as hard as ever," asserts Willie, "but it bothers me a bit to grip my gloves. You see, all I got to hold 'em with is two hooks on each hand; my thumbs are gone, and my index fingers and the middle fingers are also missing."

The only match Willie ever lost before the accident—and he had a fight a week, mind you—was a ... bout with Frankie ...

his fighting days were ended, so h... moved away from his Butchertow... home in San Francisco and went t... the pea-green country where h... bought a ranch. Fighting with hi... now is merely a side line. It is Wi... lie Hoppe, farmer, if you please, wit... his P. O. address at Windsor, Cal..

"As soon as I get the mortgag... cleaned up on my ranch I'm thru wit... fights for good," says the farme... boxer.

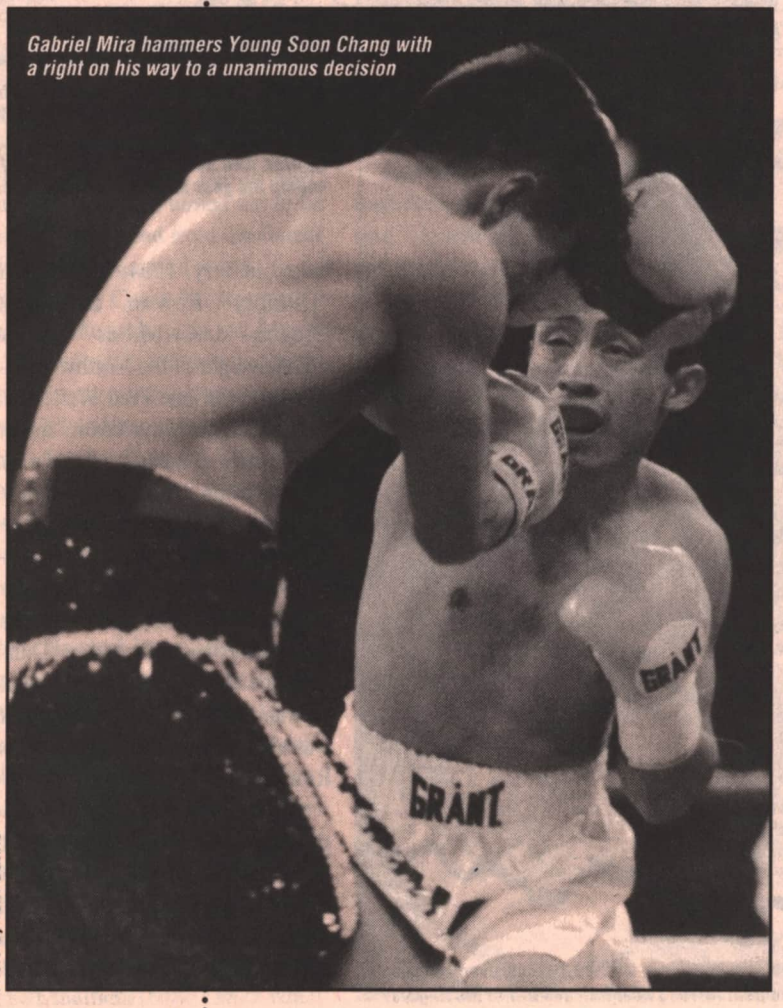
There are 27 acres in ... mostly pr...

The hands would seem to be a critical part of a fighter's body, but Willie Hoppe proved otherwise. He somehow returned to boxing after a fireworks accident in 1913 cost him several of his fingers.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
David Tua W 10 Jeff Wooden
Axel Schulz W 12 Julius Francis
Eliecer Castillo KO 2 Tim Knight
Lamon Brewster KO 1 Artis Pendergrass
Lamon Brewster KO 4 Marcellus Brown
Josh Imardiyi KO 1 Sam Hampton
Carlos Monroe KO 4 Billy Tompkins
Marcellus Brown KO 1 Harry Daniels
Vladimir Klitscho KO 3 Marcus McIntyre
Quinn Navarre KO 2 Tim Ray
Ron McCarthy KO 2 Stan Allen
Danny Williams KO 2 Shane Woollas
Butterbean KO 3 Bill Eaton

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Darren Corbett W 10 Dirk Wallyn
David Izegwire KO 4 Calvin Smith
Vassiliy Jirov KO 1 Jason Waller



Gabriel Mira hammers Young Soon Chang with a right on his way to a unanimous decision

Photo by Tom Casino

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Graciano Rocchigiani W 12 Michael Nunn
(Wins WBC Interim Title)
Dariusz Michalczewski KO 4 Andrea Magi
Ken Bowman W 12 Merqui Sosa
Jorge Castro W 10 John David Jackson
Gilberto Brown D 8 Hector Sanjurjo
Crawford Ashley KO 2 Monty Wright
Asmir Vojnovic KO 8 Giovanni Nardiello
Antonio Tarver W 8 Charles Oliver

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
David Starie KO 4 Enzo Giordano
Mads Larsen KO 3 Ray Domenge
Tony Adams KO 3 Philip Wilkerson
Omar Sheika KO 4 Paul Wesley

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Robert McCracken W 10 Lonny Beasley
David Reid W 8 Fidel Avendano
Julio Cesar Vasquez W 8 Raul Sena
Dana Rosenblatt KO 5 Terry Ford
Ali Ennebati W 12 Juan Italo Meza
Mike Hutchinson KO 1 Cornelius Lowe

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Yory Boy Campas KO 3 Anthony Stephens
(Retains IBF Title)
Keith Mullings KO 5 David Ciarlante
(Retains WBC Title)
Dean Francis KO 12 Mark Baker
Bronco McKart KO 9 Kenny Ellis
Todd Foster W 8 Reginald Strickland
Fernando Vargas KO 2 Dan Connolly

WELTERWEIGHTS
Derrell Coley W 12 Willy Wise
Edgar Ruiz KO 5 Giorbis Barthelemy
Juan Martin Coggi KO 1 Santiago Ahumada
Kevin Lueshing KO 4 Benji Singleton
Walter Crucce KO 1 Gustavo Ibanez
Scott Dixon W 10 Chris Saunders

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Vince Phillips KO 1 Alfonso Sanchez
(Retains IBF Title)
Julio Cesar Chavez D 12
Miguel Angel Gonzalez
(For Vacant WBC Title)
Diobelys Hurtado KO 2 Harold Bennett
Eduardo Castillo KO 5 Marty Jakubowski
Mark Winters W 12 Bernard Paul
Emanuel Burton W 10 Louie Leija
Shea Neary KO 6 Andy Holligan
Nordine Mouchi W 10 Abdou Mongi
David Diaz KO 4 Theon Holland
Lucia Rijker KO 1 Mary Ann Almager

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Steve Johnston W 12 George Scott
(Retains WBC Title)
Lakva Sim KO 6 Sangsun Park

Billy Schwer W 10 Jean Gornis
Tontcho Tontchev W 8 Anthony Campbell

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Robert Garcia W 12 Harold Warren
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Anatoly Alexandrov W 12 Djamel Lifa
Julien Lorcy W 10 Benito Rodriguez
Miguel Arrozal W 10 Felipe Garcia
Floyd Mayweather Jr. KO 2 Sam Girard
Floyd Mayweather Jr. KO 3 Miguel Melo
Yamato Mitani W 12 Nobutoshi Hirahana
Go Kaneuchi KO 8 Fernando Alanis

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Mbulelo Botile W 10 Mustapha Hame
Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Luis Samudio
Zahir Raheem KO 3 Garvin Crout

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Nana Konadu KO 2 Abraham Torres
(Retains WBA Title)
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi W 12 Jose Rafael Sosa
(Retains WBC Title)
Adan Vargas W 12 Narciso Rodriguez
Cuauhtemoc Gomez W 12
Marcelo Ackerman
Johnny Bredahl W 8 Cruz Carbajal

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Peter Culshaw KO 4 Foudil Madani
Victor Godoy KO 3 Luis Ortiz
Eric Morel KO 1 Miguel Juarez

FLYWEIGHTS
Chatchai Dutchboy Gym W 12 Yongjin Kim
(Retains WBC Title)
Gabriel Mira W 12 Young Soon Chang
Carlos Salazar W 12 Jose Lopez
David Guerault KO 7 Philippe Desavoye
Alejandro Montiel W 12 Ysaias Zamudio
Jesper Jensen W 12 Sam Stewart
Genaro Garcia W 12 Oscar Arciniega
Saen Sow Ploenchit KO 8 Nico Barque Bas

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Saman Sorjaturong KO 4 Shiro Yahiro
(Retains WBC Title)
Phichitnoi C. Siriwat W 12 Hadao C.P. Gym
(Retains WBA Title)
Joma Gamboa KO 9 Ryo Kurushima
Oscar Andrade KO 6 Paulino Villalobos

STRAWWEIGHTS
Ricardo Lopez Tech. Draw 7
Rosendo Alvarez
(For WBC/WBA Title)
Zolani Pethelo W 12 Faisol Akbar
(Retains IBF Title)
Rocky Palma W 12 Jun Arlos
Rocky Lin W 10 Alpong Navaja
Jose Aguirre KO 2 Martin Acevedo

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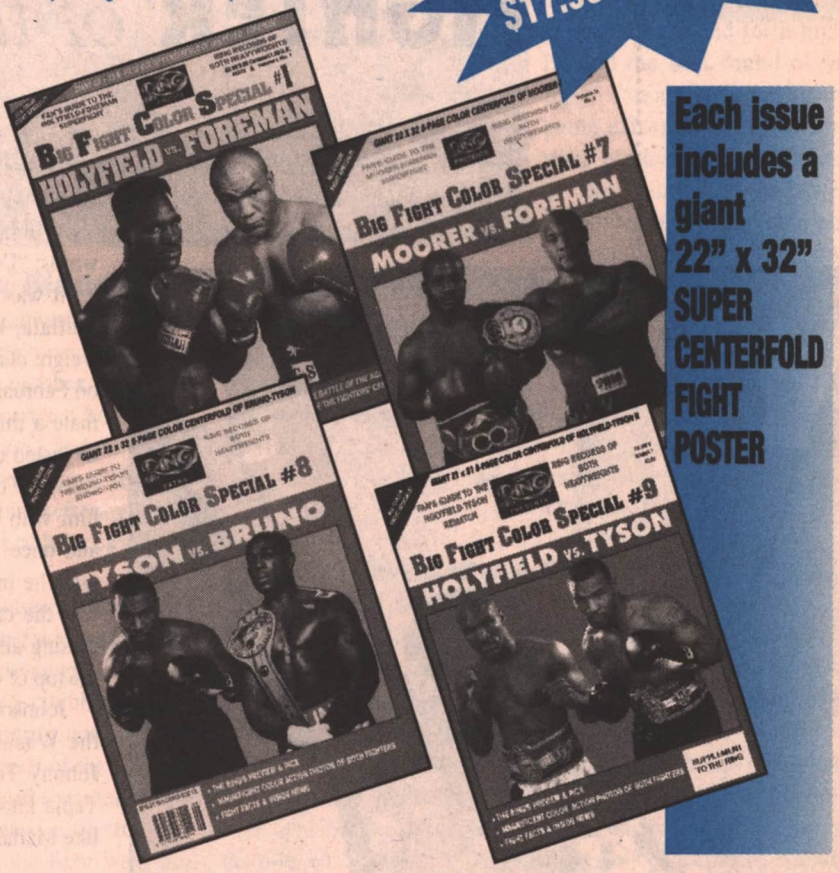

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Fighters almost never admit a potential opponent is out of their league. Part of being a successful boxer is mastering the art of self-promotion, talking the talk even if you know there's no way you could possibly walk the walk. That's why comments like that made by "Baby" Jake Matlala in response to a proposed HBO bout with Johnson make you stop and take notice. His exact words: "I'm too little. I'm too old. And he's too fast."

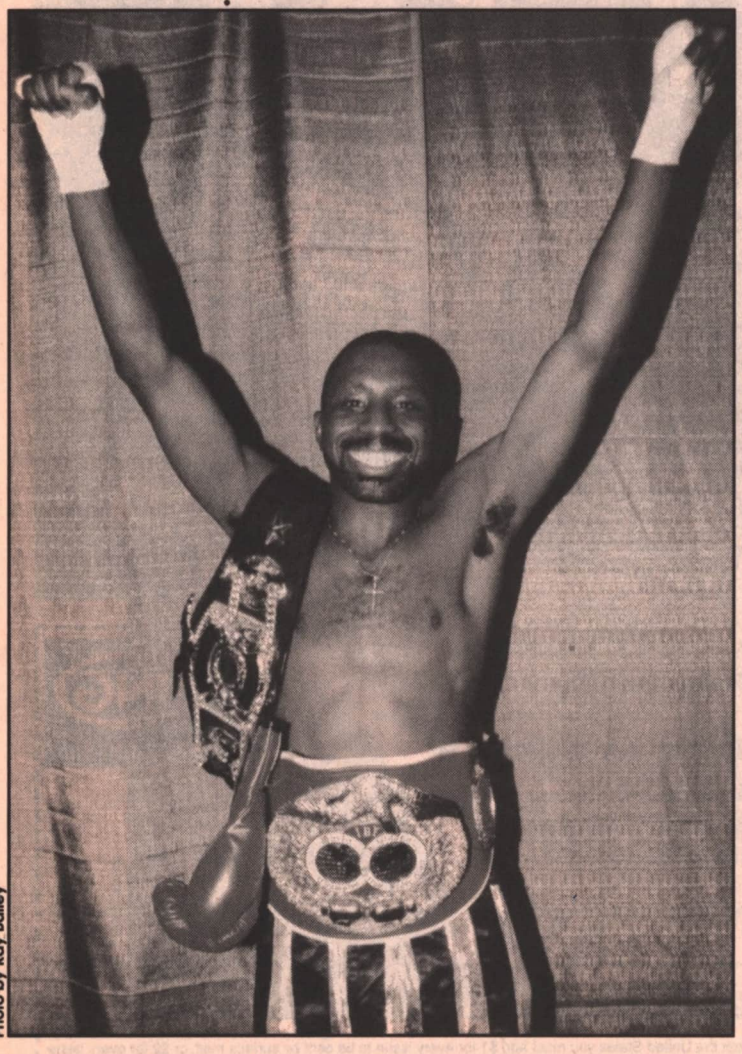


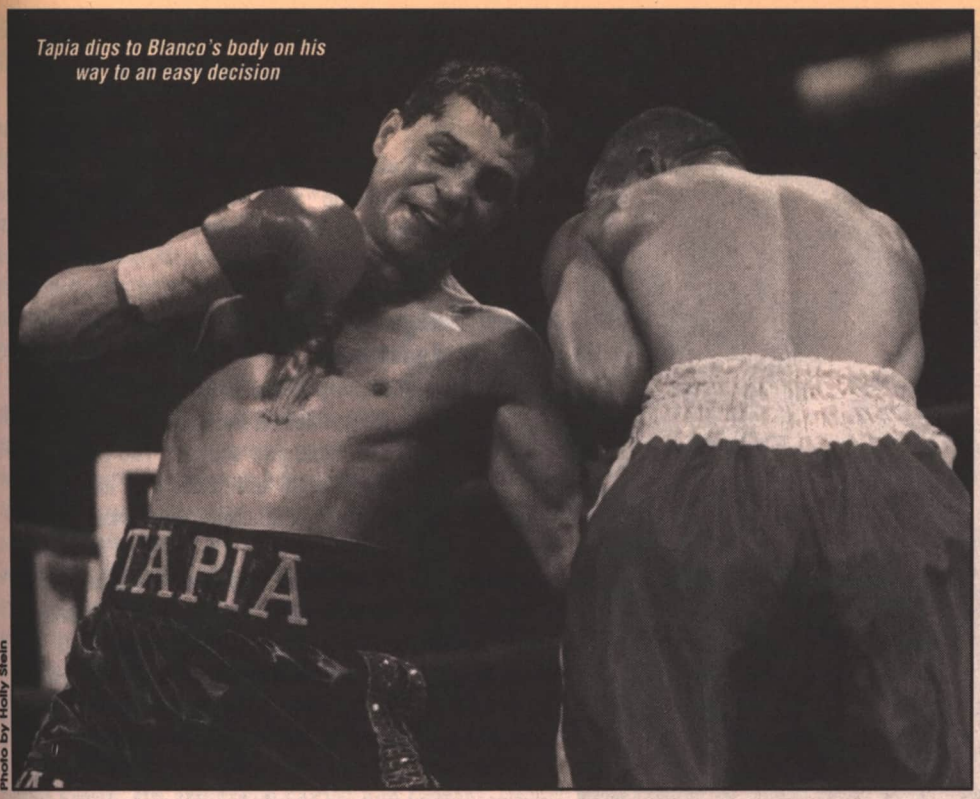
Photo by Ray Bailey

It was quite a display of humility for a top star like Matlala, but who can blame him after what IBF flyweight champion Johnson did to Arthur "Flash" Johnson on February 22? The challenger was considered as legitimate a threat to "Too Sharp's" crown as there was, yet he lasted only 71 seconds before becoming one with the canvas. The trouble started for Arthur when Mark caught him with an awkward but perfectly placed right hook, and once the champion realized just how dazed Arthur was, he moved in for the kill. A devastating left cross was the crucial blow in the combination that followed, erasing all doubts as to whether Too Sharp belongs near the top of boxing's pound-for-pound list.

Johnson immediately grabbed the microphone to lead the Washington, D.C., crowd in chants of "We want Johnny Tapia!" If IBF junior bantamweight champion Tapia knows what's best for him, however, he'll make like Matlala and look elsewhere for opponents.

• • • •

Mark Johnson



Tapia digs to Blanco's body on his way to an easy decision

Photo by Holly Stein

Johnny Tapia W 12 Rodolfo Blanco

Albuquerque, New Mexico: IBF junior bantamweight champion Tapia celebrated his 31st birthday by cruising to an easy, if not overly impressive, unanimous decision over number-nine contender Blanco in front of 13,220 extremely partisan hometown fans at The Pit, the University of New Mexico's indoor arena. Tapia, 43-0-2 (24), was simply so far superior to former IBF flyweight champ Blanco, 29-11-1 (18), that, despite suffering a bad cut over his left eye in the first round, he was able to clown his way to a comfortable victory.

The influence of featherweight showman Naseem Hamed was felt before the fight even began, as Tapia—along with a prop guy who wasn't able to get out of the way quickly enough—emerged from behind a mural of himself painted onto a crumbling faux-brick wall. The fun and games were momentarily put on hold, though, as an accidental butt in the second minute of the fight by Blanco, 31, opened a gash above Tapia's left eyebrow that threatened to bring an early ending to his second defense of the title.

Fortunately, the cut would not worsen as the fight went on. The sight of his own blood, however, incensed the champion such that he turned to dirty tactics, and the remainder of the first round was full of shoving and hitting on the break. The bloody Tapia, 115, took control in the closing moments of the first round, backing the Colombian-born Blanco, 115, Miami, Florida, into a corner and connecting with several left hands. Tapia appeared to hurt Blanco with a straight right hand and a left to the liver in the second, but Blanco came back with a strong right to the jaw in a very close third round.

In both the fourth and fifth rounds, Blanco connected with low blows and received immediate retaliation from Tapia. Completely shut out through six rounds, the challenger put in a bid in the seventh to avoid the shutout by scoring with a pair of strong right uppercuts and a looping right that reopened Tapia's wound. Yet another low blow by Blanco in the ninth inspired referee Tony Rosales (USA) to deduct a point, at the same time motivating Tapia to unleash a flurry to the body and head that staggered the Colombian.

Feeling the victory was well-secured, Tapia shifted into goofball mode at the start of the 10th, reaching through the ropes to shake Showtime commentator Bobby Czyz' hand as the bell rang. A left to the body buckled Blanco's legs, and an extended back-and-forth highlighted the best round of the fight. Tapia, pleased with the game effort of his opponent, stuck out his tongue at the end of the round and followed Blanco to his corner to offer him a hug and a head rub. The champion continued his friendly antics up until the final bell, mixing in enough left hooks to the body to win the final rounds.

All three American judges turned in lopsided scores in Tapia's favor. William Gantt and Harold Gomes both scored the bout 120-107, while William Ray had it 119-108.

Television: Showtime

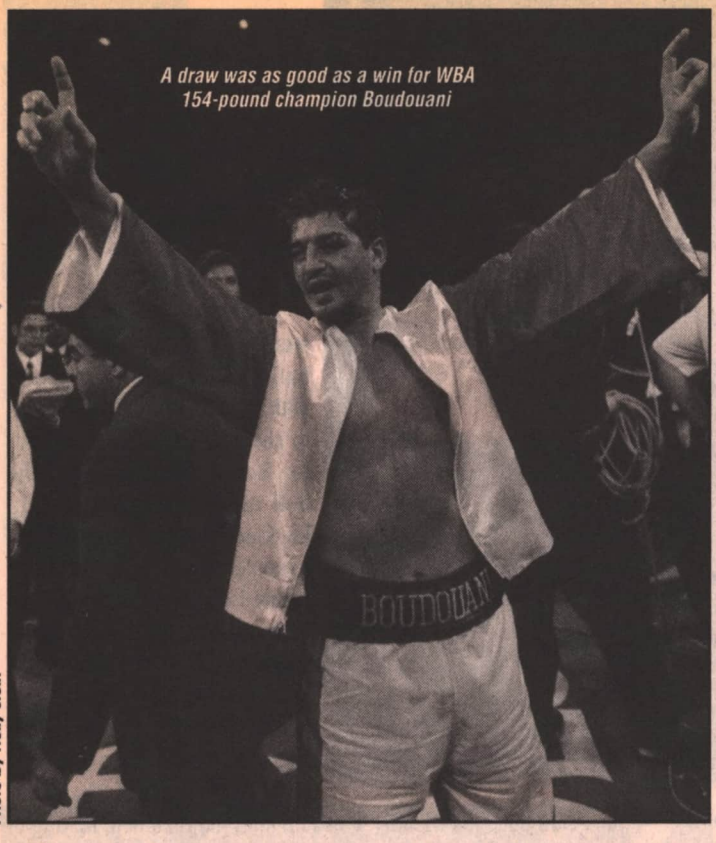
Promoter: Don King Productions

(2-13-98)

Laurent Boudouani D 12 Guillermo Jones

Albuquerque, New Mexico: In most situations, a draw is a disappointing verdict, worthy of a heartfelt round of boos from the crowd. But when ring announcer Jimmy Lennon Jr. announced to the crowd at The Pit on the campus of the University of New Mexico that Boudouani's second defense of the WBA junior middleweight title had been ruled a draw, the decision should have been applauded. Challenger Jones hadn't done enough to deserve the title, but at the same time, Boudouani's performance fell well short of earning him a notch in the win column.

Boudouani, 153¼, Grenoble, France, fought the first three rounds as if he believed they weren't being scored, allowing Jones, 153, Colon, Panama, to build an early lead. The 25-year-old challenger, who, at 6'4", boasted advantages of four inches in height and 6½ inches in reach, used his jab to peck away at the thoroughly inactive champion in the first round. Boudouani landed a right hook to the body, followed by a left to the head in the second, but still absorbed enough jabs from the Panamanian to lose the round. Matters worsened for the 31-year-old Frenchman in the third, as Jones hurt him early on with a jarring right hand. Boudouani clutched and ran until he regained his senses, and finally fired back with a pair of left hooks as the round drew to a close.



A draw was as good as a win for WBA 154-pound champion Boudouani

Photo by Holly Stein

Boudouani suddenly reversed the momentum in the fourth, as he came out blazing. A right-left combination and a lunging left hook set up an overhand right that staggered Jones. The champion closed out a dominant round with a fierce straight right, apparently making the statement that he was capable of dominating Jones whenever the mood struck him.

In the fifth, Jones tried to regain control with his jab, but wound up eating a powerful left hook, and another in the sixth. Though Boudouani's left eye began to swell from the accumulation of jabs Jones was pumping at him, his situation seemed far better than his opponent's, as Jones' punches appeared to have lost all sting by the conclusion of the sixth.

But just as quickly as he took control, Boudouani handed it back with his lethargy in the seventh, eighth, and ninth rounds. Jones relied on strong left hooks to the body and head to score points, while the best offense Boudouani could muster, with the exception of a single left that backed Jones up late in the ninth, was a low blow.

Suddenly fighting with a sense of urgency, Boudouani scored with a leaping left hook in the 10th that hurt Jones. After a very close 11th round, in which Jones was more active but Boudouani landed the more telling blows, the champion dominated the final stanza. Though Boudouani looked worse at the final bell, with a cut opened on the sizable lump over his left eye, there was no denying that his punches had done more overall damage.

Judge Neffie Quintana (USA) scored it 115-114 for Jones, while Jesus Cova (Venezuela) and Bernie Soto (USA) both saw the fight 114-114. THE RING had it 115-113 for Jones, giving the challenger the slight edge in both of the tough-to-score rounds, the ninth and the 11th.

After the fight, both competitors explained through their translators that they felt they deserved the decision. Boudouani, 36-2-1 (31), argued that he "gave more punch," and Jones, 22-1-1 (19), felt the champion "only won like three rounds."

The referee was Al Martinez (USA).

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(2-13-98)

Mark Johnson KO 1 Arthur Johnson

Washington, D.C.: Up in the dressing room of the D.C. Starplex/Armory, Mark Johnson showed friends and family The Punch. Out of his southpaw stance, "Too Sharp" took a large, quick step to his right and turned over an explosive right hook. "I'm telling you, this right is no joke," Johnson said.

Downstairs in the arena about a half-hour before, Johnson, 112, Washington, D.C., practically had paralyzed number-one contender Arthur "Flash" Johnson, 111, East St. Louis, Illinois, with the same punch. It was the first serious blow Mark landed in his fifth defense of the IBF flyweight title, and it sent Arthur retreating toward the ropes.

Too Sharp, 26, took a careful look at his opponent, sized up the situation, and waded in. He ripped off a lethal left-right-left combination to the head and Arthur, 32, rolled onto the canvas, flat on his back, out. The official time was 1:11 of the first round, but referee Joe Cooper (USA) needn't have bothered counting off any seconds.

The champion vaulted into a delirious series of flips as the homecoming crowd of 4,660 erupted. Soon the chant went up, "We want Tapia! We want Tapia!" Considering Arthur had gone 12 very close rounds with Johnny Tapia back in 1995, and had won six straight since, Mark would have to be the favorite if he moved up and secured the big-money bout.

"That was the first time I've ever been demolished," Arthur, 17-4 (10), said after the fight, trainer Angelo Dundee comforting him with a hand on his shoulder. "I didn't see it coming."

Mark said he wasn't sure how much damage that first big right hook had done initially. "I caught him with a great shot, a right hand over the top he didn't see," the champion said. "It was a punch that was unexpected. I didn't know if he was hurt. I thought he was playing possum."

Mark, 34-1 (25), admitted that he had a tough time making the 112-pound limit, but vowed not to vacate the belt until assured of a title shot in a heavier weight division.

The fight—such as it was—was titled "The Champ Comes Home," and Too Sharp admitted he had taken a pay cut from promoter Cedric Kushner to fight before his hometown fans. As if doubting the size of that contingent, the D.C. Armory was halved for the event, and an overflow crowd wound up forced to watch the bout standing behind police barricades.

They didn't have to stand for long.

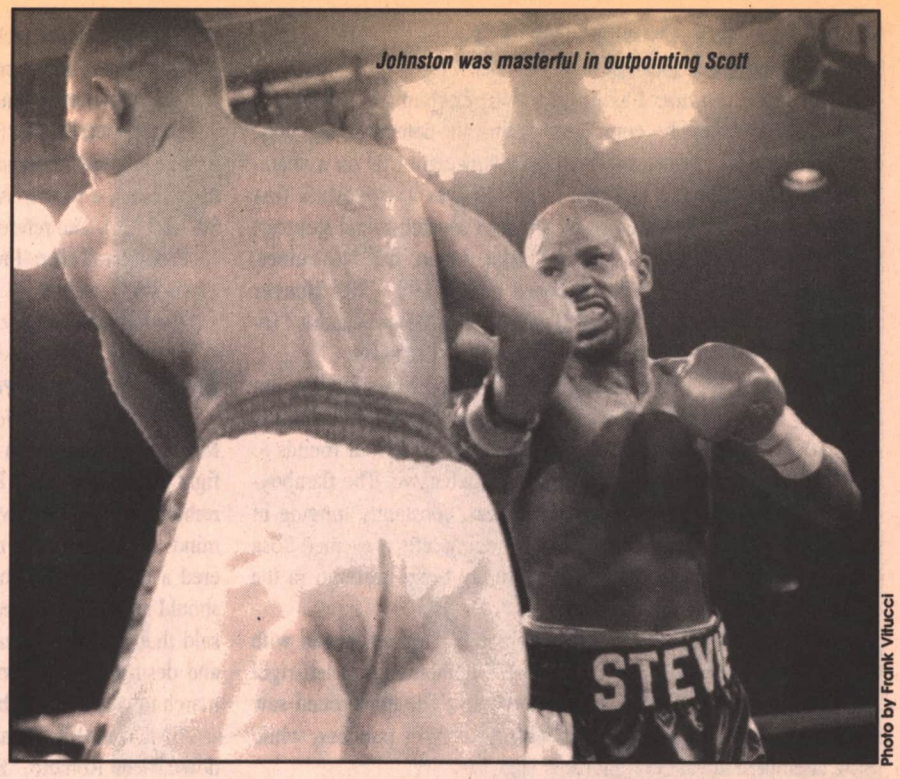
Television: ESPN

Promoter: Cedric Kushner Promotions

(2-22-98)

John Scheinman

Stevie Johnston W 12 George Scott



Johnston was masterful in outpointing Scott

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Few fighters are as adept as WBC lightweight champion Johnston at turning a perceived handicap into an asset. And despite giving away five inches to the 5'10" Scott, "Li'l But Bad" consistently beat his lanky challenger to the punch, romping home a unanimous decision winner in a brisk but one-sided bout at Bally's Park Place Casino.

Johnston understands the geometry of the ring, and uses this knowledge, plus superior hand-eye coordination, to offset whatever physical advantage his opponent appears to possess. Against Scott, he was nearly always perfectly positioned, and despite standing calmly within his challenger's punching range, he was seldom tagged by a telling blow.

Scott, a native of Liberia who has lived in Sweden since he was a boy, was brave and persistent, but after a good opening round, was never really in the fight with a chance to win. His aggression carried him forward, straight into Johnston's punishing southpaw jab, which started snapping Scott's head back with regularity in the second and was still bedeviling him in the 12th.

Johnston, 134¼, Denver, Colorado, opened a cut over Scott's right eye in the third, knocked him down with a right hook in the eighth, and generally dominated matters with his precision boxing. There were times in the middle rounds when the champion cut back on his punch rate—much to the annoyance of trainer Miguel Diaz—but never enough to allow the ever-game Scott, 135, to make up any ground.

One might have assumed that Scott, 32-2 (13), would have been better served utilizing his height and reach advantage at long range, but the challenger said it was "easier" to fight Johnston on the inside. "Stevie is slick, gives you lots of movement," the loser explained. "He's hard to catch."

Judges Carol Castellano (USA) and Kamen Petrov (Bulgaria) both scored the fight 118-109, while Sid Rubenstein (USA) had it 119-107—all in favor of Johnston, who tallied his third successful defense. The referee was Eddie Cotton (USA).

Johnston, 24-0 (13), was somewhat apologetic about what appeared to be a near-flawless exhibition, explaining that the birth of his new daughter had diverted his focus from training. Even so, his performance was good enough to earn an HBO spot against mandatory challenger Cesar Bazan in June.

Television: ABC

Promoter: Top Rank

(2-28-98)

Nigel Collins

Saman Sorjaturong KO 4 Shiro Yahiro

Yokohama, Japan: At Yokohama Arena, power-puncher Sorjaturong, 106¾, Thailand, floored the taller Yahiro, 107¼, Japan, twice and proved too strong for him in their rematch from an August 1996 contest. Sorjaturong gained the stoppage at 2:20 of the fourth session to retain the WBC light flyweight title with great ease. The 5'3" Sorjaturong, making his ninth defense, raised his credentials to 38-2-1 (31). Yahiro, a year his senior at 29, dropped to 23-4-2 (13).

Their previous meeting was in Bangkok, Thailand, with Sorjaturong winning a close fight on a ninth-round stoppage due to a bad cut on the challenger. It was expected that the fight would be just as competitive the second time around. Yahiro, some four inches taller, opened up throwing plenty of fast jabs over the champ. The first round was a good one for Yahiro, a soft-punching speedster, though Sorjaturong took it by a slight margin as he scored some left-right combos to the chest and belly.

Sorjaturong turned more aggressive in the second, pressuring the lanky jabber and landing solid one-two combos and a powerful left hook. Yahiro looked overpowered and outhustled by the willing mixer. The third followed a similar pattern, and Sorjaturong threw a looping left hook that caught the face of Yahiro in the closing seconds. Yahiro fell on the seats of his pants, but stood up to beat the count, then was rescued by the bell before Sorjaturong could capitalize.

In the fourth and final stanza, Sorjaturong cut off the ring and nailed Yahiro to the ropes. He landed a left-right combo to the face and followed with a heavy and well-timed right. Yahiro fell forward and sat down on the deck. When he attempted to stand up, he fell backward. Referee Lou Filippo (USA) didn't hesitate to call a halt.

The scores after the third were all in Sorjaturong's favor: Barbara Perez (USA) had it 29-27, awarding Yahiro the second round, while Gelacio Perez (Mexico) and Glenn Hirsh (USA) both saw the fight 30-26.

Promoter: Teiken Promotions.

(3-8-98)

Joe Koizumi

Joichiro Tatsuyoshi W 12 Jose Rafael Sosa

Yokohama, Japan: Faster and sharper than his opponent, Tatsuyoshi, 118, kept his composure against the defensive Argentine Sosa, 116¾, and retained the WBC bantamweight title on a unanimous decision over 12 lopsided frames. It was Tatsuyoshi's first defense since capturing the belt by an upset seventh-round stoppage of Sirimongkol Singmanassuk in Osaka, Japan, last November. Judge Gale Van Hoy (USA) scored it 120-108, Cliff Heaver (Australia) tallied 117-111, and Miguel Acuna (Mexico) had it 116-112, all for the Japanese champ. THE RING saw it 120-108.

Tatsuyoshi, 27, is well-known for his pugnacious fighting, but he coolly and cleverly kept outjabbing the shorter Argentine all the way. It was a mystery why the Mexican judge gave four rounds to Sosa, 28, who constantly remained on the defensive. The flamboyant champ displayed his technical prowess, constantly moving in and out and stepping side-to-side. His stinging lefts prevented Sosa from retaliating until the challenger finally broke through in the final round.

Tatsuyoshi, arguably Japan's most popular fighter, began with the jab and occasionally threw his favorite combination, a left-right followed by a solid left uppercut to the belly. The third round saw Tatsuyoshi pin Sosa to the ropes with a flurry of punches, while Sosa attempted in vain to fight back.

It became a monotonous affair, chiefly because Sosa didn't show any aggressiveness. Though winning handily, Tatsuyoshi became frustrated at Sosa's negative way of fighting and at his own inability to finish him off. The champ's cornermen advised him to keep cool and keep jabbing and outpunching Sosa.

In round 10, Tatsuyoshi accelerated his incessant attacks to the still cautious Sosa, who occasionally tried to counter him. The 11th round saw Tatsuyoshi go for the kill with his powerful left, but to no avail. Sosa was simply too defensive.

The 12th was the most hard-fought round. Sosa, for the first time in the fight, turned loose and landed a solid right to the champ's face. Tatsuyoshi was bewildered by Sosa's sudden retaliations, but he furiously fought back to nail Sosa to the ropes with a barrage of punches. If any round could conceivably have been given to Sosa, it was the 12th—though not without some generosity.

Tatsuyoshi, 16-4-1 (12), expressed his displeasure with his performance after predicting that he would finish Sosa within the distance. Sosa, a former Argentine national 115-pound champ, fell to 30-10-5 (21). The referee was Tony Perez (USA).

Promoter: Teiken Promotions

(3-8-98)

Joe Koizumi

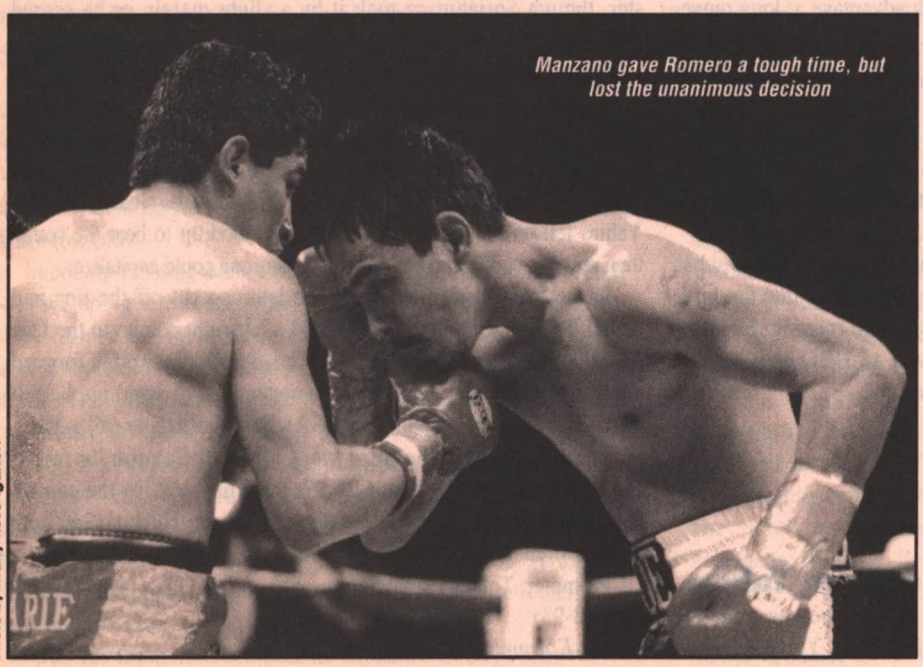
Danny Romero W 10 Joey Manzano

Ledyard, Connecticut: As Romero, 120, Albuquerque, New Mexico, warmed up in his dressing room just minutes prior to the fight at the Foxwoods Resort and Casino, he admitted that while a rematch with crosstown rival Johnny Tapia was foremost in his mind, he was looking no further than Manzano, whom he considered a lot better than his record indicated. Romero agreed that he should not have changed his usually rugged style against Tapia, and said that against Manzano he was reverting back to his old "seek and destroy" mode. No one was going to stand in the way of his march toward a rematch with his arch-nemesis.

"[Manzano] is a real stand-up guy and has never been knocked down," said Romero. "But I'll oblige that, take care of business, and knock his [butt] out."

While Romero, 32-2 (28), the former IBF flyweight and junior bantamweight champion, was never in any real danger of losing, he looked nothing like the mighty warrior who became the first American-born flyweight champion in 60 years.

The only thing that Manzano, 122, San Pedro, California, lacked that might have provided an upset of significant proportions was a punch. The 24-year-old is a fleet-footed, quick-handed boxer, but does not even have have even one knockout on his 12-7 ledger. Although Romero, normally rock-fisted at the lower weights, landed several flush right hands on his face throughout the fight, Manzano never blinked and always fired back with pitty-pat, harmless combinations. He bloodied Romero's nose in the seventh round, and at the end of the fight had his face puffy, swollen, and bruised, making him look every bit like the loser. Manzano, meanwhile, was unmarked.



Manzano gave Romero a tough time, but lost the unanimous decision

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Romero seems to lack not only firepower at 120 pounds, but hunger and intensity as well. He swore that this lackluster performance had nothing to do with a fixation on Tapia, and said that at age 23 his best days are still ahead of him.

"This guy fought the fight of his life because he was trying to make a name for himself," Romero said. "This fight was great for me because I got a lot of work. I know I didn't knock this guy out, but he was tough and tricky. You can't knock everybody out. I would have liked to get a knockout, but am not

unhappy with the way things turned out. I plan on winning titles all the way up to featherweight."

"You saw the fight, and you saw his face [afterward]," said Manzano, who has never been stopped. "He looks like the loser, not me. He didn't seem like an ex-champion to me."

The officials obviously did not concur with that assessment. The three American judges all scored it for Romero. Glen Feldman saw it 96-94, Steve Epstein had it 98-92, and John "Duke" Lawson scored it 99-94. The referee was Steve Smoger (USA).

Television: USA Network

Promoter: Cedric Kushner Promotions

(2-24-98)

Robert Mladinich

Khalid Rahilou W 12 Jean-Baptiste Mendy

Paris, France: Surprisingly outbrawned and on quite a few occasions outboxed, Rahilou, 139¾, France, survived a knockdown and a number of scares before claiming a unanimous decision over spirited former WBC lightweight champion Mendy, 139, France, to retain the WBA light welterweight title at the Palais des Omnisports. It was his second defense since taking the title from Frankie Randall in January of 1997.

A veteran of 60 fights, the 34-year-old southpaw challenger provided not only stubborn resistance, but strong ambition to the final bell. In fact, a solid combination almost floored the champion for a second time in the last round. But the 31-year-old Rahilou, 32-2 (16), produced the more sustained effort, knocking Mendy to the floor in the ninth to reverse the tables, and almost finishing him in the 11th and 12th before running into trouble himself. As an exercise in underlining his status in front of his home fans, however, it was decidedly unconvincing.

There was very little for the spectators to get excited about until a right hook sent Rahilou sprawling halfway through the third round. He was up at Panamanian referee Carlos Berrocal's count of four and stayed out of further trouble until his head cleared, rendering him able to fire back by the bell. The champion kept up a steady body attack while also cleverly switching to the head in the fourth, but Mendy, 51-7-2 (30), bounced back to seize control again in the fifth, augmenting a succession of jabs with hard left hooks to the body.

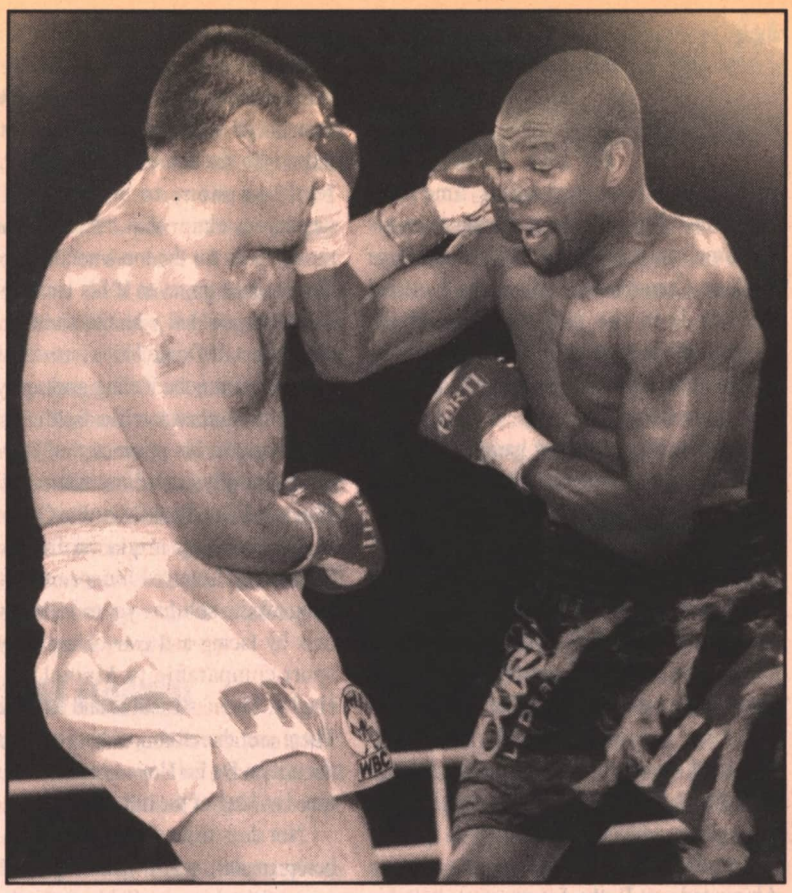
A strong right hand that rocked Mendy in the sixth was the beginning of the challenger's demise, as slowly but surely he started to run out of steam. A right-left-right combination that floored him for a count of three in the ninth threatened to take the remaining zip out of him, along with two wicked uppercuts in each of the next two rounds. But Mendy fought through the danger and, despite his fatigue, was firing back at the bell.

Lou Tabat (USA) scored it 115-111, Ove Ovesen (Denmark) had it 115-112, and Henk Meijers (Holland) saw it 114-113, all for Rahilou. THE RING also scored in favor of the champion, 115-112.

Promoter: AB Stars Prbductions

(2-21-98)

Brian Doogan



Gomez' right sneaks in before Dominguez' left

Juan Carlos Gomez W 12 Marcelo Dominguez

Mar del Plata, Argentina: Number-one contender Gomez, 188½, captured the WBC cruiserweight title by winning a unanimous decision over Argentine Dominguez, 190, in a hard-fought bout at Polideportivo Stadium.

The southpaw Gomez, 23-0 (19), a Cuban based in Hamburg, Germany, fought very intelligently. He controlled the fight by keeping his distance from Dominguez, who suffered a cut on his left eyebrow early on. Using his long arms, Gomez connected with the sharper blows, while Dominguez, 22-2-1 (12), a true lion heart, looked like a real champion in his sixth defense.

Referee Richard Steele (USA) deducted a point from Gomez in the 12th round for throwing his mouthpiece. Exhausted in the final rounds, both competitors absorbed extensive punishment as the fight ended in an all-out brawl. The scoring was unanimous for the 24-year-old Gomez, who became Cuba's eighth world champion. Chuck Giampa (USA) had it 115-113, while Terry Smith (USA) and Angel Guzman (Puerto Rico) scored the bout 116-112.

Gomez said afterward that he would grant Dominguez, 28, a rematch, and the ex-champion, fighting off tears, promised: "I will be champion again." The fight was close enough and definitely exciting enough to warrant a second go-round.

Promoter: Osvaldo Rivero

(2-21-98)

Carlos Irusta ■

Who Will Fall?

(Continued from page 37)

or Akinwande while marking time until "Iron Bite" Mike Tyson is sprung from his "lifetime" suspension by the Nevada State Athletic Commission. Given the fact that Nevada is in the midst of a big-fight drought, it's a good bet Tyson's application for reinstatement will be granted after the one-year minimum.

Keeping himself out of harm's way for a while in order to protect Holyfield-Tyson III is a sound business decision. A climactic clash of biter and bitee would draw in all the fringe and non-boxing fans who presumably would pass on Holyfield-Lewis. Sitting back in anticipation of a $30-million windfall is no crime, and Holyfield already knows that Tyson can't beat him. And if he retires without ever having fought Lewis, well, Holyfield has taken on so many tough guys throughout his career he shouldn't have to apologize to anyone.

Prediction: Evander beats up on Akinwande or Botha for practice, gets his date with Tyson and again thrashes the man with the bionic teeth. But his pride being what it is, Holyfield can't step away just yet; he finally consents to a go at Lewis, but, at age 37, finds that he is the reincarnation of Joe Louis—the ancient Joe Louis who was punched into retirement by a young, hungry Marciano. As he's taken to the hospital for treatment, Holyfield mutters, to no one in particular, "Why didn't I fight that guy two years ago when I had the chance?"

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

Once, when outlining the career he envisioned for his hottest attraction, promoter Bob Arum said Oscar De La Hoya would follow the Sugar Ray Leonard blueprint, going from big fight to bigger fight to still bigger fight. The small fish, Arum suggested, would be thrown back or never reeled in.

It's an interesting analogy, particularly to critics who charge that De La Hoya has made his reputation by beating up much smaller men instead of picking on guys his own size. The anti-Oscar forces point to John-John Molina and Jesse James Leija as examples of opponents who, their many accomplishments notwithstanding, were selected because of their lack of heft or some other exploitable shortcoming.

De La Hoya, the WBC welterweight champion, is widely regarded as boxing's best, but he is something of an easy target for those who see him as too handsome, too perfect, too phony to be believed. So the naysayers claim that "The Golden Boy" mostly goes for the too-small, the too-old, or the too-used up, even if his list of victims is liberally sprinkled with the names of former champions. If De La Hoya is as terrific as his handlers claim, the feeling goes, why doesn't he fight another terrific fighter, someone who's also in his prime and of more or less the same physical dimensions? Someone like, say, Felix Trinidad or Ike Quartey?

De La Hoya might be following the Sugar Ray Leonard blueprint, but, unlike Leonard, he still has yet to affirm his greatness by facing and conquering giants of the sport comparable to Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns, and Roberto Duran. There are, therefore, pockets of resistance to the notion De La Hoya is or should be recognized as king of the hill.

Nor does there seem to be much progress being made toward matching De La Hoya against the best available foes. America's only 1992 Olympic gold medalist was in training for a mandatory defense against France's little-known Patrick Charpentier when an injury to his left wrist pushed the date back two weeks, then another three months to June 13. Hammering Charpentier will do as much to embellish De La Hoya's reputation as would a Holyfield clobbering of Botha or Akinwande.

De La Hoya seems to be aware of the lofty standards he is expected to attain, and he realizes a busload of Charpentiers won't take him there. "I want Trinidad," he said.

But asking for the most enticing non-heavyweight fight out there and getting it are two different things, and much red tape must be cut if such a confrontation is to take place. Can Arum and Don King, who currently promotes Trinidad, ever find a common ground? Would the megafight take place on TVKO or SET? Anyone have a coin to flip?

De La Hoya at times has appeared to lose focus, which is something you might expect from someone who at times isn't sure who he wants to manage, advise, or train him. Hey, the kid has a lot on his mind; when this boxing thing ends, which he insists will be within five years, he'll have to decide how to amuse himself from a slew of options. Should he make movies? Spend more time on the golf course? Or engage in serial starlet-dating?

Prediction: De La Hoya gets Trinidad, the opening salvo in a classic three-bout series that enriches and enhances both men. Or he becomes frustrated should the roadblocks prove to be insurmountable. A bored De La Hoya could prove vulnerable to, say, David Reid another two years or so down the road. The guess here is that "The Golden Boy" gets Trinidad sooner instead of later—specifically early-1999—and loses by knockout, then avenges the loss in a rematch. Rubber match, anyone?

ROY JONES

Just a guess, but there could be some lady with a better singing voice than Barbra Streisand who is perfectly content singing in the shower.

It sometimes seems as if Jones, the most naturally gifted fighter on the scene today, is like that lady hitting all the high notes as she shampoos her hair in the privacy of her own home. He certainly seems to derive little pleasure from going onstage and revealing his prodigious talent in public.

Jones' every action is, in a career sense, illogical. The almost inescapable conclusion is that he really does not enjoy boxing, but engages in it because he is a prisoner of his abilities. He won't be paid so well or recognized so much for doing anything else, so he teases us with a series of come-ons that are tantamount to bait-and-switch.

Upon naming Murad Muhammad as his new promoter, Jones almost casually wandered off to shoot baskets, giving the media the impression he didn't care who made his matches. He has played minor-league hoops on the same day that he made a super middleweight title defense, and he has talked about fighting two guys on the same night and stepping all the way up to heavyweight. Then, when a deal to mix it up with faded former heavyweight champion Buster Douglas had been agreed to in principle, Jones nixed the fight, saying his dad, Roy Sr., had warned him that he would be "risking his life." Now Jones says he is holding out for Holyfield.

Note to Jones: Great potential does not translate to greatness. Saying you can do something is not the same as doing it.

Tyson's $27-million score against Peter McNeeley notwithstanding, fighters who are exorbitantly compensated have to earn those sultans' ransoms. If you don't seem to care, why should anyone else?

Prediction: Jones will claim he can beat Holyfield and Tyson in the same night, then decline a rematch with the smaller Bernard Hopkins because it's too dangerous or because HBO won't give him $10-million. He instead arranges a computer bout between himself and Sugar Ray Robinson, then cries fix when the computer awards Sugar the decision. He uses some of the money he's saved from boxing to buy a USBL franchise, then appoints himself first-team shooting guard. After three games, he insists he's better than Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan put together. If any of boxing's top superstars has a realistic chance of retiring without another loss, it's Jones, who will probably quit before he faces a real challenge.

FELIX TRINIDAD

Puerto Rico's brightest star is a wasted talent who, unlike Jones, is not the primary architect of his ongoing demise. "Tito" wants to fight the best, but this finely tuned fighting machine has unconscionably been allowed to rust while propped up on cinder blocks.

Trinidad's last ring appearance was on August 23, 1997, a first-round knockout of Troy (Shallow) Waters. His next outing, on April 3, was to be against Zaire's Mahenge Zulu. Neither Waters nor Zulu is headed for the International Boxing Hall of Fame and, unless he significantly upgrades the level of his opponents, Trinidad, the IBF 147-pound champion, won't make it either.

What Trinidad needs is a clear-the-decks date with De La Hoya—or, failing that, at least with Quartey or Whitaker. He still is young and still has plenty of time, but too often the finest fighters are left waiting at the altar, so to speak. It would be a crime against boxing if Trinidad were consigned to an eternal limbo of Waterses and Zulus.

Not that Trinidad is without his Achilles' heel—his is somewhere up around his chin—but no one who has dropped him has been able to keep him there. And the power he possesses in his overhand right is frightening to behold.

There are rumors that an impatient Trinidad will bolt King and defect to another promoter who presumably would be more inclined to pair him against the best available opponents. All fight fans know is that they want De La Hoya-Trinidad to happen, promotional and pay-cable conflicts be damned.

Prediction: We'd like to guarantee a De La Hoya-Trinidad scrap, but negotiating an end to the war in Vietnam was easier than putting together a unification showdown of the world's foremost welterweights. If boxing dies, failure to make this fight will be inscribed on the tombstone. Optimists can only hope Oscar & Felix, no odd couple, start production on a long-running series soon. And there's little chance Trinidad will escape such a trilogy without acquiring the first blemish on his record.

NASEEM HAMED

He's flashy, he's unconventional, he's daring, he's unique—and he's more flawed than his ardent but tunnel-visioned supporters care to admit.

With Naz, it's as much about style as substance. Yeah, this featherweight can punch hard with both hands, but his best moves tend to be on his production-number entrances. His watershed conquest of Kevin Kelley, in which each man was down three times, was as much *Saturday Night Fever* as *Rocky*.

Detractors—and they are plentiful—note that the little southpaw does almost everything wrong, in a technical sense. Supporters—and they are even more numerous—point out that Naz, like Muhammad Ali and Roy Jones, has a way of making it all turn out right.

Prediction: HBO, which signed Hamed to a multifight contract, is going to have to see more than Michael Jackson dance steps to reap full benefit from its $12-million investment. The guess here is that a showboating Hamed will have his hands down when someone—maybe Marco Antonio Barrera—catches him flush on the chin and teaches him a new, unchoreographed wobble. If not Barrera, there are still a number of fighters in the talent-laden featherweight and junior feather divisions who could dethrone "The Prince." The guess is that it will happen by early next year, if not late-'98. If Naz were only half as good as he thinks he is, he'd be the greatest of all-time. Prime candidate to be as spectacular as a knockout victim as he is as a knockout artist.

JOHNNY TAPIA

Tapia's domination of Danny Romero was one of the most accomplished performances of 1997, but there are questions as to how far he can ride the momentum of that career-best effort.

Loyalty? Tapia unceremoniously dumped Arum, who had stuck by him throughout several suspensions for cocaine abuse, for King, who offered a larger sack of money. It's the way of the world in modern sports, and Arum has done the same thing, stealing fighters from King. But in this case Tapia came off looking like an ingrate.

Determination? No question Tapia has lots of that, insofar as boxing is concerned, but his past trouble with drugs has much of the boxing world wondering when the other shoe will drop—again. He sometimes gives the impression of being an unruly child who doesn't like being made to stand in the corner, and is itching to stick his hand in the cookie jar again.

Consistency? Tapia has gone through his share of managers and trainers. Teddy Atlas is the latest to get the assignment of helping Tapia become the best he can be. And you thought Atlas and Moorer was an odd couple arrangement.

Prediction: Still the best in the world at 115 pounds, but a volatile personality and lack of pop could put him at risk. Unless a rematch with Romero can be made, not too many opponents can get him the money he figures he deserves. Mark Johnson has been calling him out, and "Too Sharp" has the attributes—a southpaw style and big punch—to tap out Tapia. Johnson is a big enough name to make the price right. It could happen before the end of 1998.

So who will be the first to fall? The safest bet is Hamed, who seems willing to challenge himself on a regular basis and has all sorts of exploitable weaknesses. When the rest of the bunch will suffer their next (and in most cases, first) defeats depends on how soon the big fights can be made, but this much can be said: None of them will retire as successors to Marciano's throne. ■

Bernard Fernandez, a regular contributor to this magazine, covers boxing for the Philadelphia Daily News.

Hamed

(Continued from page 39)

with whom he is so close. And he can be a role model for underprivileged members of his community and an entire youth culture that is cool and hip, yet get embroiled in airport altercations with staff who claim he boasts of carrying a weapon in his luggage and former champions who accuse him of showing no respect.

Whatever way you take him, Naz is news, a British-Yemen amalgam who already dances to the beat of a new millennium.

"He's good for boxing," proclaims his eccentric, but engaging trainer, Brendan Ingle, an Irish graduate of the school of hard knocks who teaches his fighters to hit and not be hit.

"He's a clown and looks like he was separated at birth from Mr. Bean," says Jack Fiske, the doyen of American boxing writers who always call a spade a spade, and a shovel a shovel.

"Yemenis do believe that Naseem has put the country on the world map," insists Dr. Abdul Shaif, chairman of the Sheffield Yemeni Community Association, alluding to the impact the diminutive 24-year-old has made on the Arab nation.

So who exactly lies behind the public facade of invulnerability that Hamed has perpetuated? Is he as cocky as he seems? Are there serious character flaws that will prevent him from reaching the status of ring legend?

In the homeland of his forefathers, Hamed is legendary already. He can march at the helm of the Presidential Guard and have his name chanted like he was a conquering king. The president of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Samula, regularly lavishes expensive gifts such as cars and jewelry on him following his fights. And Hamed, in turn, has strong influence over the Yemen leader.

"The village where our family comes from in the north of Yemen never had electricity or running water," explained Riath Hamed, The Prince's older brother and business manager. "Naz spoke to the president about this, and within 48 hours these issues were being addressed. Electricity and running water came, roads were being built, and a proper infrastructure was put in place. And all because Naz brought it up with the president."

Nice man that he is, it is difficult to envision Evander Holyfield exerting the same hold on Bill Clinton. Humility is therefore not a major trait in the Hamed makeup. A childlike self-absorption makes it essential that he is the center of attention, which is also no doubt why the unbeaten featherweight—whose declared intention this year is to unify the 126-pound division and ultimately to surpass the reputations of Willie Pep, Sandy Saddler, and Salvador Sanchez—has fashioned such an outlandish style. He may still train alongside youngsters and amateurs in his Sheffield gym, but when he works, he treats them with absolute disdain.

"Why wouldn't he? These kids are going to be challenging him in the years ahead," counters Ingle.

Purses that make him the highest paid featherweight in history and sponsorship deals such as the one with adidas, which make him one of the richest athletes in the world, hardly enhance his modesty. Nor do they render him any more inclined to go in for self-deprecation. Hamed takes himself seriously inside the ring and out, and pandering to his significance is the only way to get on his right side.

He is effortlessly generous to those around him, however, spreading the substantial wealth he has already accrued from the shrewd manipulation of his career by promoter Frank Warren to his family and friends. All eight brothers and sisters are on the payroll and actively involved in the marketing of his fan club. His mother and father have been handsomely taken care of, and one Christmas they watched with disbelief as Hamed emptied thousands of pounds of notes from a large plastic bag over most of the living room floor. As with most Muslims, the family is fundamental, which makes it all the more surprising that he secretly married his girlfriend, Eleasha, without his parents' knowledge.

The fact that she was not a Muslim herself seriously disturbed Sal Hamed and his wife, who had strong misgivings about their son becoming a professional fighter because in the Arab culture, sport is a pastime and not a career. They frowned on the relationship, which began immediately after Hamed set eyes on the blonde in a Sheffield nightclub. Their romance seemingly came to an end last year because of his parents' disapproval, but a clandestine relationship continued, and when Eleasha became pregnant toward the end of last year, Hamed decided to marry her.

"He just didn't show up to the gym one day, which was unusual, and the next thing we knew, they'd got married," said Ryan Rhodes, a middleweight contender and one of Hamed's closest friends. "They're happy together and that's what it's all about."

Whether or not the discord in his family about his marriage will affect Hamed remains to be seen, but with a baby on the way, his priorities are sure to change. Already he has assumed greater control of his career by appointing Riath as his manager to replace Ingle, who had managed him from the time he turned pro but remains his trainer. It is to be hoped that Ingle also retains some semblance of a controlling influence, because Hamed's impudence has in the past brought about some unseemly situations.

At Manchester Airport, he got into trouble not for brandishing a gun, but for ill-advisedly intimating there was one concealed in his luggage. The security threatened to get heavy-handed until Hamed backed down belatedly. And late last year, he became involved in a fraças at Heathrow with Chris Eubank before flying out to New York to publicize his Madison Square Garden bout against Kevin Kelley.

"He was rude and totally disrespectful, and somebody must teach him a lesson," said Eubank, who was chided by Hamed, who was showing off his title belts. Eubank snapped when Hamed boasted, "I've got what you don't," and grabbed both belts and slung them across the floor.

"I should have turned the other cheek, but my anger got the better of me. This kid does that to people," added Eubank, who knows a thing or two about getting other people's backs up.

Perhaps it is his rebellious nature, his total renunciation of convention that appeals to the new age boxing fan who looks for glitz and razzmatazz over dedication and substance, and for whom Hamed has become an icon.

"It's like Beatlemania all over again when he goes out to the Yemen, and he gets quite a reaction in arenas here [Britain], too," says promoter Warren. "He's brought a new breed of fan to the sport."

But despite the adulation heaped on him, Hamed remains a devout, practicing Muslim who religiously observes Ramadan and

forced his wife to convert before marrying her. In a rapidly changing life, his faith is the only constant.

"My power, my confidence, my talent, my whole being comes from God," explained Hamed. "Everything I achieve—and I believe I am destined to achieve great things—are in honor of Allah and the gift He has given me."

Hamed regards "the gift" as precious.

"He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, he doesn't do drugs," said Ingle. "He will do nothing to jeopardize the marvelous talent he was born with. The only vice he has is driving fast cars."

In March this year, he was fined £300 (about $500), plus £40 in court costs for speeding in his Porsche. Remedial action seems to have been taken with the decision to raffle off the car to fan club members. But he still has a whole fleet remaining.

While his power in the ring is accepted, his power outside the ring is often no less pronounced. Just ask the Welshman Darren Morgan, who was giving world snooker champion Stephen Hendry, a friend of Hamed's, a beating before Hamed showed up.

"He sat down in the press seats and he got me beaten," said Morgan. "Every time I bent down to take a shot, I could see him over the pocket. It was like looking into the eyes of the devil."

Opponents beware. ■

Brian Doogan is The Ring's European correspondent.

Mexico

(Continued from page 42)

By the time a headbutt produced a huge wound over Lopez' right eye that forced referee Arthur Mercante to call a halt after the seventh round—a round dominated by Alvarez, incidentally—Lopez had recovered to a large degree and was the busier, though perhaps not stronger, fighter. The long-delayed announcement that Samuel Conde (Puerto Rico), Tom Kaczmarek (USA), and Dalby Shirley (USA) had scored it 68-63 for Alvarez, 67-64 for Lopez, and 66-66, respectively, making it a technical draw, brought its own unusual circumstance. On this night, what else would you expect? (THE RING had Lopez ahead, 66-65.)

In a press release distributed after the fight, Sulaiman stated that WBA representative Carlos Chavez (no relation, thank heaven for small favors) collected the scorecards after the decision was announced, locked them in his briefcase and, before the WBC had a chance to inspect them, disappeared to Alvarez' locker room to oversee the postfight drug tests. Eventually, he reappeared, but, according to the release, Chavez "absolutely rejected" the idea of providing the WBC officials with the original scorecards. He did hand over copies, except for the one containing Shirley's seventh-round card, as "he had misplaced it and could not find it."

Sound strange? Not on this night in Mexico City. All things considered, the pro-Lopez throng, which thunderously chanted "May-hee-co! May-hee-co!" throughout the night, took the blemish on Lopez' record surprisingly well. Or maybe they were just worn out at that point from constantly fighting, throwing cups of beer at one another, heckling ringsiders, and demanding that the Showtime/SET camera men working the fight stop impeding their view from ringside.

That those in charge of the Chavez-Gonzalez promotion felt compelled to supply at the door such items as removable seat cushions and packets of hair conditioner that could be easily fashioned into missiles, was, in retrospect, foolhardy. (What real fight fans use hair conditioner anyway?) One such target of both those particular projectiles, as well as other unmentionables, was photographer Holly Stein, whose pictures of the bouts adorn these very pages.

"It was pretty horrible, by far my worst boxing experience," she said. "There was no security at ringside and all the photographers were getting pelted with seat cushions and other things. I wasn't the only one. Everyone was getting hit. Johnny Eisen from *Sports Illustrated* got hit by an apple."

Those weren't the only items hurled in her general direction.

"There was a group of men behind me who, whenever I stood up to take a picture, would shout obscenities and yell, 'Go home, you blonde bitch!' A lot of fights broke out. You'd hear yelling and screaming, there was beer flying. It was constant."

Certainly, none of those in attendance had a patent on bad behavior, as fans around the world and across sports have become increasingly unruly in recent years. Last year, for example, the management at Veterans Stadium, the home of football's Philadelphia Eagles, responded to repeated complaints by inserting an on-site magistrate to judge, sentence, and jettison riotous fans from the premises.

Going to major league baseball games has become, in many areas, riskier than a night at the fights. And one only has to recall the melee that erupted at the end of Bowe-Golota I in Madison Square Garden to know the folly of skimping on security at major events. Perhaps the folks in charge of planning for crowd control at the converted bull ring were banking on easy victories by Lopez and Chavez, outcomes they figured would keep the crowd content.

The crowd required no coaxing to erupt when Chavez entered the ring, looking a bit pasty, but tighter than he did during his win over Tony Martin early last year. They hoped against reason, as Chavez surely did, that the old warrior would reveal himself as say, the Chavez of 1990, as though the fights against Pernell Whitaker, Frankie Randall, and Oscar De La Hoya were representative simply of off-nights, and that he was the same fighter whose brilliance made him one of the best of his era.

But from all appearances, "J.C. Superstar" shared none of the enthusiasm of his compatriots. He was unusually stoic during the singing of the Mexican national anthem and, for the most part, wore throughout the night a look that could best be described as a grimace, a face that looked in constant, quiet agony. It is the face 35-year-old fighters wear when they ask their body to do what it did when it was 25. The look never left him and stood in sharp contrast to the memories we have of him, his face bright with glee as he pummeled Edwin Rosario, Roger Mayweather, Hector Camacho, and countless others.

In the middle of all the madness stood poor Gonzalez, and clearly one couldn't help but feel pangs of sympathy for him. Here he stood in Mexico City, on his own turf, where he makes his home and his living, and yet the crowd—much of it anyway—booed and leered his every move, as though he were not a Mexico City product at all, but rather from a land as far away from the border as one could get.

On any other night, probably against any other opponent, Gonzalez, 27, would have been cheered and praised just as Chavez was

(Continued on page 60)

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Mexico

(Continued from page 59)

on this evening. But the Mexican fight fans are loyal to their heroes like no other. Like Ruben Olivares, Pipino Cuevas, Carlos Zarate, and others before him, Chavez is majesty in Mexico. Gonzalez, for all his heritage, as well as his considerable success in the ring, was, on this night, just another pug. And truly, Gonzalez knew that his position was difficult going in, as it is whenever a young lion goes in to vanquish a beloved old one. He tempered his prefight talk with caution on most occasions, always sure to give the old man his due.

"I think that Julio Cesar Chavez has been a great champion," he told the assembled media in the days leading up to the fight. "But he has to understand that there are young people who want to occupy his place. And I want that person to be me."

Not exactly the stuff of which heated fights—or even heated arguments, for that matter—are born, despite King's incessant prodding to heat things up during the prefight press conferences. Except for one statement during which Gonzalez promised to "shut Chavez' mouth," his tone was respectful and, largely, so was his performance.

Gonzalez, 42-1-1 (32), opened with a persistent jab that troubled Chavez and won him the first round on all three judges' cards. After that, however, he fought conservatively and in spurts, as did Chavez. Frequently, Chavez, 99-2-2 (82), came on in the last 30 seconds of a round, as old fighters often do. When he opened up, those familiar hooks to the body and head, that straight right hand, looked authentic. He could still turn it on when he had to, but he couldn't sustain it. It was as though he knew he had X number of punches in him, and lest he run out before the final bell, he had to use them sparingly. As a result, the two took turns grabbing and then relinquishing momentum, boxing briefly, then attacking. By the end, both sported swollen left eyes for their trouble, and those who had friends or family at the arena hoped for an ending that wouldn't bring the house down.

They got it, sort of, when the scores of judges Terry Smith (USA), Larry O'Connell (England), and Chuck Hassett (USA) were revealed as 115-114 for Chavez, 116-114 for Gonzalez, and 115-115, respectively. (THE RING saw it even as well.) On this night in Mexico City, however, the drama wasn't quite over, not yet. Apparently, Hassett's scorecard was incorrectly transcribed by a WBC official as awarding Gonzalez the sixth round when in fact Hassett scored it even. It was tallied correctly regardless, and Hassett's original score was reflected in the final decision. (The referee was Lupe Garcia.)

The surrealism surrounding the event didn't end when the fighters made their way back through the flickering lights that were caused by a near power outage, which seemed a perfectly fitting way to end the evening. In the days following the bout, the headlines in newspapers across Mexico screamed of the great robbery that occurred in the converted bull ring, how the matador had victory stolen from him when clearly the bull had been slain. The outcry put Sulaiman in the altogether unfamiliar position of defending a stance that, to most observers not blinded by their love of Chavez, seemed perfectly just.

And almost immediately, the announcement came that the rematch would be in June. The title remains vacant, after all, and there are yet many questions to be asked and answered.

Maybe we'll get lucky and Lopez and Alvarez will be matched again on the same card. We'll watch, even without all the bizarre goings-on. In fact, it would be a refreshing change. Sometimes, the fight is enough. ■

William Dettloff, a frequent contributor to this magazine, is a freelance writer based in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

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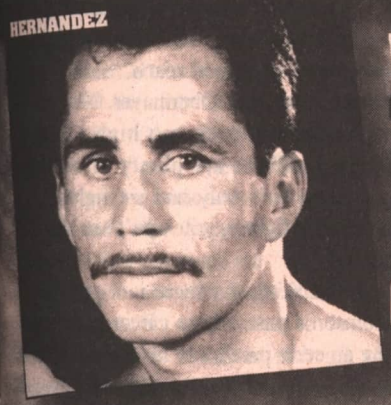

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HERNANDEZ VS CARLOS CERENA

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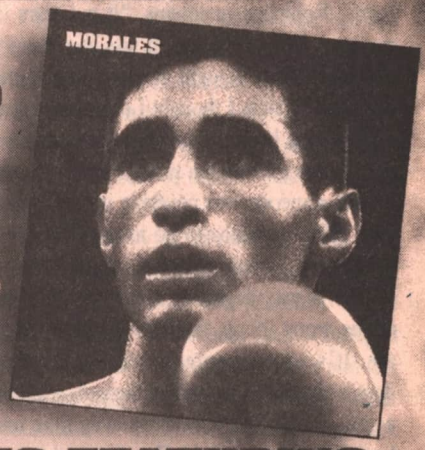

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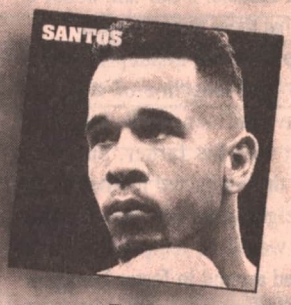

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New Faces

(Continued from page 16)

ing hotel rooms during the Trials, Robinson was never able to be reached. He wasn't in the room assigned to him and was under the assumption the fight would take place at around 7 p.m. (it actually started at 2 p.m.).

At about six, he was coming out of the elevator with his gym bag in his hand on his way to the fight when he received the bad news. It knocked him cold. Gone was the chance to represent his country, an opportunity to win a gold medal, the endorsements, and the large contract he hoped to sign with a promoter. Everything he'd worked toward was wiped away with a stark, single sentence: "You've been disqualified!"

There's still some residue.

"No one told me about the time of that fight," Robinson maintains. "It put tears in my eyes, I was very hurt. It was something I had deal with. I thought they would give me a second chance. I thought I deserved a second chance because someone else messed up. No one told me the time of the fight, and I think someone was covering up for a mistake. With a chance to go to the Olympics, believe me, I would have been there.

"I was very depressed at the time. It's one of the worst things that's ever happened to me. It's what people dream about; they dream about making things happen, winning a gold medal. That was taken away from me. I see Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones; they got robbed of gold medals. I can talk about it now. I learned that those things happen."

The Olympic Trials mishap is just a small segment in a long line of unhappy events that have influenced Robinson's life. He never met his father, and was taken from his drug-addicted mother when he was about eight years old. He was told the separation would be temporary, but it wasn't. Bounced around in foster homes as a child, Robinson learned that the only person he could depend on was himself. When he was 18 years old, he was allowed to leave the group home he was placed in.

"That's why it meant so much being on the Olympic team," Robinson said. "You do well there, you get to talk to kids, be a role model. I don't see my family that much. I have to fulfill all my dreams, try to stay away from things that could get me in trouble. I've never been in jail. I still see my mother, but that's rare. She's better now, better than she was when I was a kid. I just have to concentrate on myself at this point in my life."

Robinson came to boxing relatively late. A skinny, frail kid who started for the basketball team at John Bowne High School, Robinson wanted to add some muscle to his slight frame. There was boxing at a local gym, and Robinson, then 18, decided to give it a try. He was a natural. Within a year, he advanced to the New York City Golden Gloves quarterfinals as a super middleweight. The following year he made it to the finals. Then he took a three-year sabbatical from boxing, from 1992 to '95.

Out on his own, Robinson had bills to pay. Sometimes he worked two jobs and simply didn't have time to train. But in 1995, Robinson decided to give boxing another try. He was a little older, a little larger, and more mature. He began to notice something different when he got back into the swing of things—he'd improved.

He won the New York City light heavy Golden Gloves title, then qualified for the nationals, capturing that title in '95. This led to the Olympic Trials in '96.

"I just wanted to try it one more time, that's when I won the Golden Gloves nationals," Robinson said. "I think the layoff helped me out a lot. I beat guys that were rated ahead of me. I always had the height and the skills. I was still learning when I first started. I never competed against that type of competition before, but when I returned, I was better prepared to face them."

Jimmy Glenn, Robinson's trainer, has been with Robinson for the last three years. He's seen him go from a possible Olympian to someone making headway as a pro prospect. Robinson's determination was one the features that attracted Glenn to him.

"I feel Glenn could be champ within the next two or three years," said the veteran trainer. "He moves very well in the ring. He has a real good right hand, and he's tall. All we need are fights, because he learns every day in the gym. I have to cut him out from working, he works so hard. He hasn't had things easy, that's why he's determined to be something. He was raised in a rough neighborhood. He could have easily went the other way, but he chose to go this way."

As a pro, Robinson has taken his sinewy build and one-punch power and found quick success. He's a Michael Spinks-type of fighter in that doesn't look like he's hurting his opponent until he makes contact with his chin. He works the body well and his height gives him a good vantage point from which to fire the jab. If he has a flaw, it's leading with his chin.

"Robinson's a good offensive fighter, fairly tall with a good reach," said veteran boxing writer Jack Obermayer. "He probably has his chin up too high when he comes in. There are plenty of question marks, but he's only had six fights. He's an exciting fighter, you won't see him in a dull fight."

Still lurking out there is a ghost from Robinson's past, whose career path is running an eerie parallel to his own—Antonio Tarver. After Tarver made the Olympic team, he soon found himself in a quandary, criticized for not bringing home the gold. Tarver, now 9-0 (7) as a pro, and Robinson would make an intriguing match, and Robinson would love to see it happen.

"I know I can give anybody a good fight, as long as I'm prepared mentally and physically," Robinson said. "I would like to be world ranked by the end of the year. Most likely, I'll meet Tarver down the line."

And if he does, don't be surprised if Robinson shows up before the guys who set up the ring. ■

Magic

(Continued from page 33)

company might be getting a smaller percentage of the pie, it would be coming from a much bigger pie. He can help bring advertising into boxing. He can be very, very good for the sport."

For Johnson to make his mark, however, he must procure talent. In addition to his talks with Tyson and Jones, he never has been secretive about his interest in Hamed. Johnson realizes the allure of flamboyance, and he likes what he sees of the Arabian-born Englishman known as much for his lavish ring entrances as his

devastating power and quickness.

"I think 'The Prince' is very good for boxing," Johnson said. "His showmanship is great. He's bringing something fresh, something you haven't seen. And it's wonderful. He's marketed very well. Now we need to get him going here."

Because of contracts, Johnson must be careful in talking to most fighters. But that does not preclude him from accepting their phone calls.

"The phone's been ringing a lot because I know what guys need," he said. "I'm an athlete-turned-businessman. I know what the athletes are going through. I know what makes them tick. They know me. And so there's a sense that I want to help them. I'm somebody who they want to work with. They know what they're getting when they approach me."

Johnson is not only looking for established talent. He also wants to develop some on his own. He plans to begin construction on a gym in or near Los Angeles this year. And that led to one last question as Magic unfolded himself from his seat: If you had made the decision as a youngster to enter a boxing gym instead of a basketball gym, what would you have been?

"Me? A winner," Johnson answered. "I would be a winner. Whatever style I needed to win, that's the one I would have adopted. I've been a winner all my life. I don't know how to lose." ■

Tim Graham covers boxing for the Las Vegas Sun and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Handicapped Fighters

(Continued from page 47)

the ring, the mutes tell the referee that he must stamp with his foot ... on every count, and by this means they know just how long they have to regain their feet."

One story about "Dummy" Rowan, published years later by newspaperman Rupert Rice, probably belongs in the same category as tales of Don King's benevolence toward his boxers. According to Rice, Rowan was hit with "a terrific blow in the stomach" in a fight with Mike McClure. "Rowan, in agony, shouted, 'You big bum!' then fell on his face to be counted out. When he came to, Rowan was dumb again."

While "Dummy" Mahon was probably the best boxer to ever fall out of the sky over San Francisco, two of the best to ever work its rings were lightweights Willie Hoppe and Paul Martin. They called Hoppe "King Of The Four-Round Game," around 1912, when four rounds was as long as fights could legally go in the City by the Bay. Lightweight champion Ad Wolgast predicted that Hoppe would someday wear his crown.

On the day before Independence Day 1913, Hoppe was helping a youngster stuff and light a cannon full of fireworks. It exploded, and with it so did Hoppe's championship hopes, along with the thumb, index finger, and most of the middle finger on each of his hands.

Nevertheless, the man called in one press account "the scrappiest little boxer that ever drew on a glove" was back in the ring after the accident as a headliner in San Francisco. "I can still punch as hard as ever," Hoppe said, "but it bothers me a bit to grip my gloves. You see, all I got to hold 'em with is two hooks on each hand."

That's more than Martin had after the early-1900s fighter sheared off all of the fingers of his left hand with an electrical saw while building a boat. An even better architect than he was a fighter, Martin actually invented a special boxing glove to wear in the ring over his digit-less mitt, but problems with the grip couldn't be overcome, and he retired after one more bout.

A character after "Gator" Bodzianowski's own heart was the man known as "Blink" McCloskey, who didn't need the Wisconsin bureaucracy to tell him it was okay to fight with just one eye.

"I suppose you think I can't fight because I have only one eye," McCloskey said to his manager, Walter Houleman, after Houleman walked into his room one day and saw McCloskey's other eye, made of glass, sitting in a tumbler of water. "Just watch me when I go."

In over 100 bouts all over the world from 1902-'20, the Philadelphia native, whose opponents included Joe Wolcott, Willie Lewis, Jack Johnson, and Georges Carpentier, was "a remarkable boxer and seldom took any blows around the face," wrote Houleman of McCloskey in his memoirs.

(Continued on page 64)

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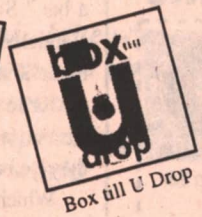

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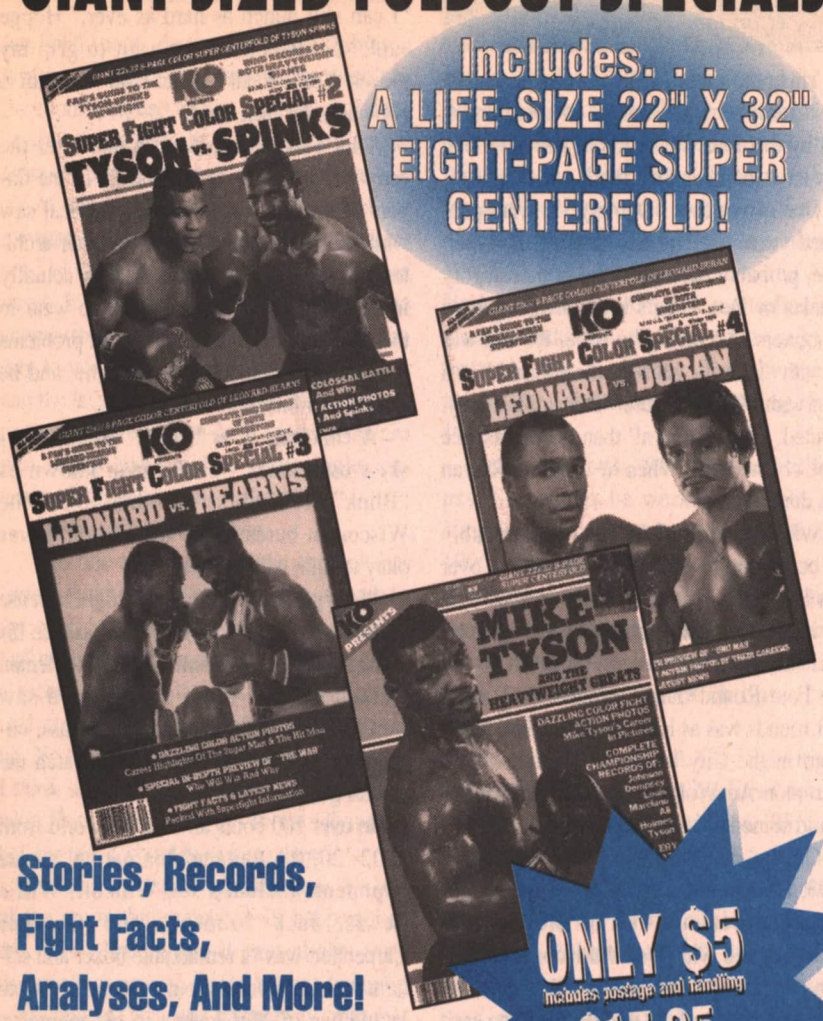

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Handicapped Fighters

(Continued from page 63)

The only time his one eye was a problem in the ring was when ne'er-do-wells working his corner in an overseas fight rubbed a foreign substance in it to slow him down against a local favorite.

Not counting "Dummy" Rowan's alleged momentary cure, there is only one known case of an afflicted boxer actually leaving the ring in better shape than when he climbed through the ropes. And Sylvester Sims' handicap was actually more social than physical, inasmuch as the cross-eyes with which he was born didn't prevent him from engaging in all manner of roughneck sports as a boy, including the one in which Sims' uncle, Jack Johnson, had become heavyweight champion of the world.

The man who is today, at 69, one of Milwaukee's premier artists, whose paintings have graced galleries all over the country, used to sit on the banks of the Milwaukee River and pray for a cure for a malady that made him the butt of other kids' jokes. A major operation when he was 11 failed to uncross Sims' eyes. But the condition was actually an advantage in the ring. "My opponents would think I was looking at the crowd or somewhere else, but I was looking right at them," says Sims, who went undefeated in 19 amateur fights before turning in his gloves to play semi-pro football.

He won the Wisconsin Golden Gloves light heavyweight title in 1947, but what happened in a preliminary fight meant even more to him. His opponent, George Vandenberg, hit Sims with a straight left jab between the eyes. "It felt like he hit me with a bat," Sims recalled. He went on to knock Vanderberg out, and later in the locker room made a startling discovery. "I looked in the mirror to see if my nose was broken," recalls Sims, "and my eyes were straight. And they've been straight ever since."

Which brings us, finally, to another category in which golf lags far behind boxing. Aside from that chip shot that won the U.S. Open for Tom Watson in the early-1980s, what flat-out miracle as golf ever produced? ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were complied as of January 1998, the WBC as of March 1998, and the IBF as of March 1998.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	C	C
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	1	2	7
Ray Mercer (USA)	2	3	4
John Ruiz (USA)	3	7	–
Oliver McCall (USA)	4	–	–
David Tua (NZ)	5	–	–
Larry Donald (USA)	6	–	12
Buster Douglas (USA)	7	–	–
Jerry Ballard (USA)	8	12	10
Shannon Briggs (USA)	9	–	–
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	10	–	–
Henry Akinwande (GB)	–	1	5
Jade Scott (USA)	17	4	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	5	–
Michael Moorer (USA)	19	6	6
Orlin Norris (USA)	–	8	–
Michael Grant (USA)	22	9	–
Francois Botha (SA)	15	10	2
Vaughn Bean (USA)	–	–	1
Hasim Rahman (USA)	27	–	3
Obed Sullivan (USA)	–	–	8
Chris Byrd (USA)	20	–	9

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	2	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	–	–	C
Johnny Nelson (GB)	1	–	–
Nate Miller (USA)	2	3	6
Jacob Mofokeng (SA)	3	11	3
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	4	–	–
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	5	–	12
Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP)	6	–	–
Dale Brown (CAN)	7	–	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	8	5	1
Darren Corbett (IRE)	9	10	11
Eliecer Castillo (CUBA)	10	–	–
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	1	–
Terry Dunstan (GB)	–	4	10
Tiwon Taylor (USA)	29	6	7
Ken Murphy (USA)	15	7	4
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	–	8	–
Adopho Washington (USA)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Faustino Gonzalez (COL)	–	–	5
Uriah Grant (USA)	–	–	8
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	–	9

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	–	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	C	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Michael Nunn (USA)	1	7	–
Graciano Rocchigiani (GER)	2	–	5
Richard Frazier (USA)	3	4	6
Montell Griffin (USA)	4	–	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	5	3	12
Jorge Castro (ARG)	6	–	–
Ole Klemetsen (NOR)	7	8	–
Ken Bowman (USA)	8	11	8
Fabian Chancelay (ARG)	9	–	–
Lincoln Carter (USA)	10	12	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	1	–
Dario Matteoni (ARG)	18	2	–
Richard Hall (USA)	27	5	4
Merqui Sosa (DR)	14	6	–
Anthony Bigeni (AUS)	–	9	–
Eddy Smulders (HOLL)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	26	–	3
Mark Prince (GB)	13	–	7
Yosukezan Nishijima (JAP)	–	–	9
David Telesco (USA)	–	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Thulane Malinga (SA)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	C
Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA)	1	–	–
Robin Reid (GB)	2	–	–
Dean Francis (GB)	3	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	4	6	5
Roberto Duran (PAN)	5	–	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	6	9	–
Richie Woodhall (GB)	7	–	–
Mads Larsen (DEN)	8	–	–
Antoine Byrd (USA)	9	7	–
Mauricio Amaral (BRA)	10	2	3
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	–	1	4
Herol Graham (GB)	–	3	10
Bruno Girard (FRA)	19	4	–
Francis Dean (GB)	–	5	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	–	8	7
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	10	–
Antoine Byrd (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Joseph Kiwanuka (UGA)	13	–	6
Reginaldo Andrade (BRA)	16	–	8
Byron Mitchell (USA)	26	11	9

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	11	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	1	–	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	2	–	3
Stephane Ouelette (CAN)	3	12	–
Julio Cesar Vazquez (ARG)	4	–	–
Kevin Palmer (USA)	5	–	–
Robert Allen (USA)	6	2	1
Antoine Echols (USA)	7	–	2
Alex Zaitzev (RUS)	8	–	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	9	8	–
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	10	–	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	1	–
Peter Venancio (BRA)	–	3	10
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	4	8
Anthony Andrews (GUY)	18	5	–
Brian Barbosa (USA)	13	6	12
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	–	7	5
Abdula Ramadan (CAN)	–	9	4
Roberto Duran (PAN)	–	10	–
Ken Ellis (USA)	–	–	6
Dan Trevino (USA)	–	–	7
Urbano Gurrola (MEX)	–	–	9

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Mullings (USA)	C	–	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	–	C	–
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	–	–	C
Ahmed Dottuev (BALK)	1	11	10
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	2	2	–
Terry Norris (USA)	3	–	8
Tony Marshall (USA)	4	5	–
Robert West (USA)	5	–	–
Kookyui Song (KOR)	6	–	–
Said Bennajem (FRA)	7	–	–
Nick Rupa (USA)	8	–	–
Oba Carr (USA)	9	–	–
Anthony Jones (USA)	10	–	–
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	1	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	20	3	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	–	4	–
Tony Menefee (USA)	–	6	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	27	7	–
Jason Papillion (USA)	19	8	3
Andrew Murray (GUY)	–	9	5
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	18	10	–
Anthony Stephens (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Aaron Davis (USA)	–	–	4
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	14	–	6
Raul Marquez (USA)	13	–	7
Sergio Luciano (BRA)	–	–	9

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Patrick Charpentier (FRA)	1	8	7
Derrell Coley (USA)	2	6	6
Andrei Pestryaev (RUS)	3	–	–
James Page (USA)	4	–	–
Ariel Chaves (ARG)	5	–	–
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	6	–	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	7	–	–
Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)	8	–	–
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	9	10	12
Suk Hyun Yun (KOR)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	–	2	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	–	3	–
Oba Carr (USA)	–	4	11
Juan Negron (PR)	27	5	–
Jeff Malcolm (AUSTRL)	–	7	–
Michele Piccirillo (ITA)	11	9	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	1
Mahenge Zulu (ZAI)	–	–	2
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	3
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	4

Vernon Forrest (USA)	12	–	5
Juan Negron (PR)	–	–	8
Walter Saporiti (ARG)	–	–	9
Adrian Stone (GB)	–	–	10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	–	1
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	C	–
Vince Phillips (USA)	–	–	C
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	1	3	–
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	2	4	–
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	3	2	6
Rafael Ruelas (MEX)	4	–	–
Reggie Green (USA)	5	7	8
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	6	–	–
Soren Sondergaard (DEN)	7	–	–
Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR)	8	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	9	1	2
Ricardo Silva (ARG)	10	–	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	30	5	3
Freddy Rojas (CHILE)	22	6	4
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	–	8	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	9	–
Guillermo Mosquera (COL)	–	10	–
Terron Millett (USA)	–	–	5
Jan Bergman (SA)	12	12	7
Rafael Ruelas (USA)	–	–	9
Alex Carillo (COL)	–	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	C	–
Shane Mosley (USA)	–	–	C
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	1	–	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	2	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	3	–	–
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	4	–	–
Jong Kwon Baek (KOR)	5	–	–
Billy Schwer (GB)	6	3	12
David Dodi Tetteh (GHA)	7	–	11
Eduardo Morales (ARG)	8	2	1
Israel Cardona (USA)	9	6	2
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	10	10	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	–	1	–
Ceppy Holman (INDO)	–	4	–
Fred Ladd (USA)	–	5	6
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	7	4
Phillip Holiday (SA)	–	8	5
Colin Dunne (GB)	27	9	–
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	–	–	3
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	–	7
Demetrius Ceballos (USA)	–	–	8
Luis Flores (COL)	–	–	9
Oscar Palomino (SPA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	C	–	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	–	–
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	2	9	7
Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS)	3	7	–
Tracy Patterson (USA)	4	–	6
Justin Juuko (UGA)	5	–	–
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	6	–	–
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	7	–	–
Djamel Lifa (FRA)	8	4	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	9	–	–
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	10	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	1	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	2	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	3	–
Tom Johnson (USA)	13	5	11
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	6	1
Harold Warren (USA)	19	8	2
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	10	–
Jaime Rangel (COL)	–	–	3
Ramon Ledon (CUBA)	–	–	4
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	18	–	5
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	17	–	8
Tsutoma Yasuda (JAP)	–	–	9
Moises Pedroza (COL)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lakshi Espinosa (PHIL)	C	–	–
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	–	C	–
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	C
Cesar Soto (MEX)	1	–	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	2	–	–
Paul Ingle (GB)	3	–	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	4	–	11
Carlos Rios (ARG)	5	10	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	6	12	–
Dramane Nabaloun (BKF)	7	–	10
Billy Hardy (GB)	8	–	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	9	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	10	2	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	1	–
Genaro Rios (NIC)	–	3	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	4	5
Frederic Perez (FRA)	–	5	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	24	6	2
Victor Polo (COL)	–	7	1
Chamopekt Chorchamuang (THAI)	–	8	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	–	9	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	11	3
David Santos (USA)	27	–	4
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	6
Arnulfo Castillo (USA)	–	–	7
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	22	–	8
Teofilo Carranza (PER)	–	–	9

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Vacant	–	C	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	C
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	1	–	–
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	2	–	7
Spencer Oliver (GB)	3	5	3
Michael Brodie (GB)	4	–	–
Jose Luis Bueno (MEX)	5	–	–
Pastor Maurin (ARG)	6	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	7	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	8	–	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	9	4	–
Yonghoon Lee (KOR)	10	–	–
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	1	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	–	2	–
Carlos Barreto (VEN)	–	3	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	6	–
Serge Poilblan (FRA)	16	7	–
John Johnson (USA)	–	8	5
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	9	1
Bong Chul Kim (KOR)	12	10	–
Harold Mestre (COL)	–	–	2
Nurhuda (INDO)	–	–	4
Anell Barotillo (AUSTRL)	–	–	6
Ariston Clayton (USA)	23	–	8
Esteban Morales (COL)	–	–	9
Ernesto Gray (COL)	–	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	C	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Paul Ayala (USA)	1	3	12
Adan Vargas (MEX)	2	–	7
Jorge Monsalvo (COL)	3	–	–
Danny Romero (USA)	4	–	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	5	–	5
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	6	–	–
Victor Rabanales (MEX)	7	–	–
In Jin Chi (KOR)	8	–	–
Masahiko Nakamura (JAP)	9	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	10	8	–
Abraham Torres (VEN)	–	1	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	2	–
Daorung C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	4	–
Jose Rojas (VEN)	–	5	–
Yong Hoon Lee (KOR)	–	6	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	11	7	–
Sahoiu Phaisarn Gym (THA)	–	9	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	24	10	–
Adrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jesus Perez (COL)	19	–	3
Juan Sanchez (COL)	–	–	4
Alberto Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	6
Oscar Garro (ARG)	13	–	8
Cesar Singo (ECU)	–	–	9
Willy Perdomo (DR)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	C	–	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	–	C	–
Johnny Tapia (USA)	–	–	C
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	1	7	–
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	–	–
Luis Benavides (COL)	3	–	–
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	4	–	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	5	11	–
Adonis Cruz (NIC)	6	–	–
Victor Godoy (ARG)	7	–	–
Pedro Rincon (COL)	8	–	10
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	9	–	–
Samson Dutchboygym (THAI)	10	–	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	27	1	4
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	2	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	3	–
Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI)	–	4	–
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	5	12
Felix Machado (VEN)	25	6	–
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	–	8	–
Edicson Torres (VEN)	–	9	–
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	–	10	–
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	1
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	2
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	12	12	3
Sombak Singchawan (THAI)	–	–	5
Juvenal Berrio (COL)	–	–	6
Jaji Sibali (SA)	–	–	7
Solo Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	8
Joel Luna (MEX)	–	–	9

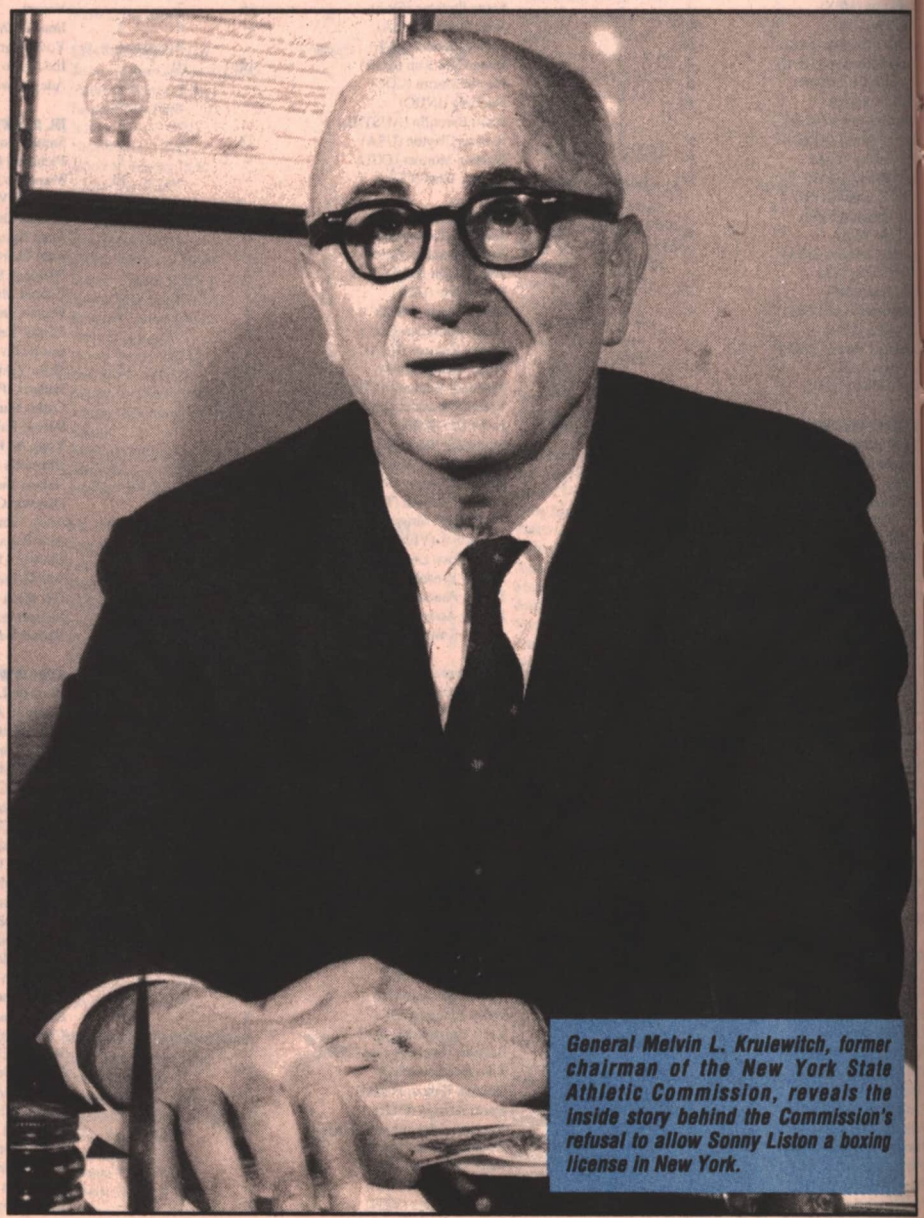
FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	C	–	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	1	–	–
Raul Juarez (MEX)	2	–	–
David Guerault (FRA)	3	9	9
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	4	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	5	–	–
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	6	7	11
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	7	–	–
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	8	–	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	9	–	–
Chokchai Chokviwat (THAI)	10	–	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	1	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	–
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	–	3	6
Arthur Johnson (USA)	–	4	8
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	5	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	11	6	–
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	8	3
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	10	–
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	4
Yodchingchai Somthong (THAI)	–	–	5
Ilido Julio (COL)	18	–	7
Adey Lewis (GB)	13	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	–	C
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	1	–	–
Yosam Choi (KOR)	2	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	3	2	2
Kaaj Chartbandi (THAI)	4	–	–
Phanieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	5	–	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	6	–	–
Edgar Cardenas (MEX)	7	–	–
Sangik Yang (KOR)	8	–	–
Sandre Oviedo (ARG)	9	–	–
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	10	6	–
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	1	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	3	7
Suzuki Kabato (JAP)	–	4	–
Yong Jin Kim (KOR)	16	5	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	13	7	10
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	–	8	–
Oswaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	9	3
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	–	10	–
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	1
Onewin Chareon (THAI)	–	–	4
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	5
Gill Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	6
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	–	–	8
Hernan Berrio (COL)	–	–	9

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	C	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	C
Rocky Lin (JAP)	1	1	–
Payak Nakornluang (THAI)	2	8	–
Carmelo Caceres (PHIL)	3	–	7
Lindi Memani (SA)	4	12	–
Wandee Chareon (THAI)	5	–	–
Myung Sup Park (KOR)	6	–	–
Domingo Guillen (DR)	7	–	10
Sang Chul Lee (KOR)	8	–	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	9	–	2
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	10	–	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	2	–
Ronnie Magramo (PHIL)	–	3	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	4	–
Satoru Abe (JAP)	18	5	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	–	6	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	7	–
Wondee Charoen (THAI)	–	9	–
Kermin Guardia (COL)	–	10	–
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	–	–	1
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	28	–	3
Ratanapol Sow Voraphin (THAI)	–	–	4
Ala Villamor (PHIL)	–	–	5
Juan Herrera (COL)	–	–	6
Boy Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	8
Daniel Reyes (COL)	17	–	9

CLASSIC

GEN. KRULEWITCH REVEALS INSIDE STORY OF NEW YORK COMMISSION BAN OF LISTON



General Melvin L. Krulewitch, former chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission, reveals the inside story behind the Commission's refusal to allow Sonny Liston a boxing license in New York.

From THE RING, October 1971

Major General Melvin L. Krulewitch was appointed chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission in 1959 at a time when the sport had reached an all-time high in underworld influence. The General helped to clean up the sport. At the height of his investigations into boxing, the General was heard to remark, "Iwo Jima Was Never Like This!"

By Maj. Gen. Melvin L. Krulewitch

(Editor's note: This is a condensed version)

Charles "Sonny" Liston was the world heavyweight champion from September 25, 1962, to February 25, 1964. Liston won the title in Chicago, from Floyd Patterson, and lost it in Miami Beach, to Cassius Clay.

Liston, who was found dead in his Las Vegas home on January 5, 1971, was the only heavyweight champion who did not fight within the confines of what now is the City of New York. He applied for and was refused a license by the New York State Athletic Commission, of which I, at the time, was the chairman.

Liston gained his unenviable *sui generis* position because he was not good for boxing; he had been associating with persons whose reputations did not recommend them as citizens; and in the opinion of our Commission, he could not be trusted with the world title if he achieved it.

In refusing a license to Liston, our Commission, on which my associates were Raymond J. Lee and James F. Farley, Jr., made perhaps the most important decision in boxing since the Walker Law was passed in New York in 1920. That law has governed New York boxing since.

The verdict barring Liston from fighting in New York was announced by me on April 27, 1962. At the time, and since then, there have been various erroneous translations of the decision against Liston. It was not discussed with me by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller or Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz. It was based on evidence collected not only by our Commission, but by the Commission of Pennsylvania, as well as the FBI.

Foremost, it was a decision that could not have been made in favor of Liston. I, for one, was determined not to hurt the reputation of the State of New York, merely for the sake of bringing a world heavyweight fight to New York. Reportedly, the fight would have been "good for business" in New York. This point the Commission did not consider for a moment. The question: Could it be good for boxing? We voted, "NO!"

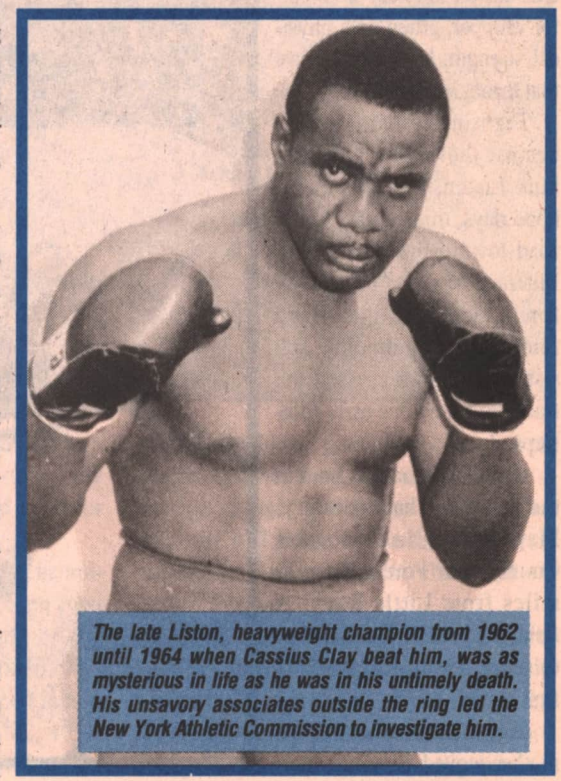
For weeks leading up to the refusal of a license to Liston, the fight public was told that the Commission "could not afford" to displease some of the boxing public by barring Liston. There came pressures from high and low, the appraisals and decisions, and in the last analysis, the fulfillment of my job was the last protective line of the integrity of the State, insofar as boxing was involved.

It was, for me, a training period in a profession of which the public experiences little and knows less, except for the roar of the crowd and the poisonous columns of a few sportswriters. Barbed shafts, slinky innuendoes, and inspired paintings took daily tolls. I remained in "the kitchen," continuously under fire.

Sonny Liston was food and drink for them. He was bad. But who was responsible? We all were, I suppose. Even Father Stevens, Liston's priest friend in prison who helped him to a parole, unwittingly led him astray.

Irving Mitchell Felt, of Madison Square Garden, invited me for a collation prior to the Cassius Clay-Oscar Bonavena fight. We walked to the arena and there I saw Harry Markson, *charge d'affaires* of boxing in the Garden. Back rolled the years, to a day 11 years previous, when I had reluctantly accepted the vulnerable and unappealing spot of Chairman of the New York State Athletic Commission, and to a visit I had with Harry when I was "green in my judgment."

Harry spoke of a good heavyweight, then a new resident of Philadelphia. I asked why he hadn't appeared in New York. An invisible curtain descended on his sharply outlined features and his smile blanked out. Behind the mask came a significantly inscrutable expression. Here was something more than met the eye. This I later confirmed. For years, pre-Markson, the Garden had been handicapped by Frankie Carbo, Blinky Palermo, and others. Now some-



The late Liston, heavyweight champion from 1962 until 1964 when Cassius Clay beat him, was as mysterious in life as he was in his untimely death. His unsavory associates outside the ring led the New York Athletic Commission to investigate him.

Liston and Floyd Patterson (right) shake hands prior to the first of their two title fights, both of which resulted in first-round knockouts by Liston.

thing had been added. Sonny Liston was coming up.

Of all the boxing writers who hammered out millions of words about Liston, none had touched on the real Sonny, the boy who went lost the day he was born. Most of the writers pictured Sonny as bad. Sonny was a single human life, no better, no worse, than the capricious and fickle angles of life permit. Hunger, poverty, ignorance, greed, and violence were his—not pretty ingredients. As an illiterate child cotton cropper, gifted with physical strength, he remained just that throughout his life.

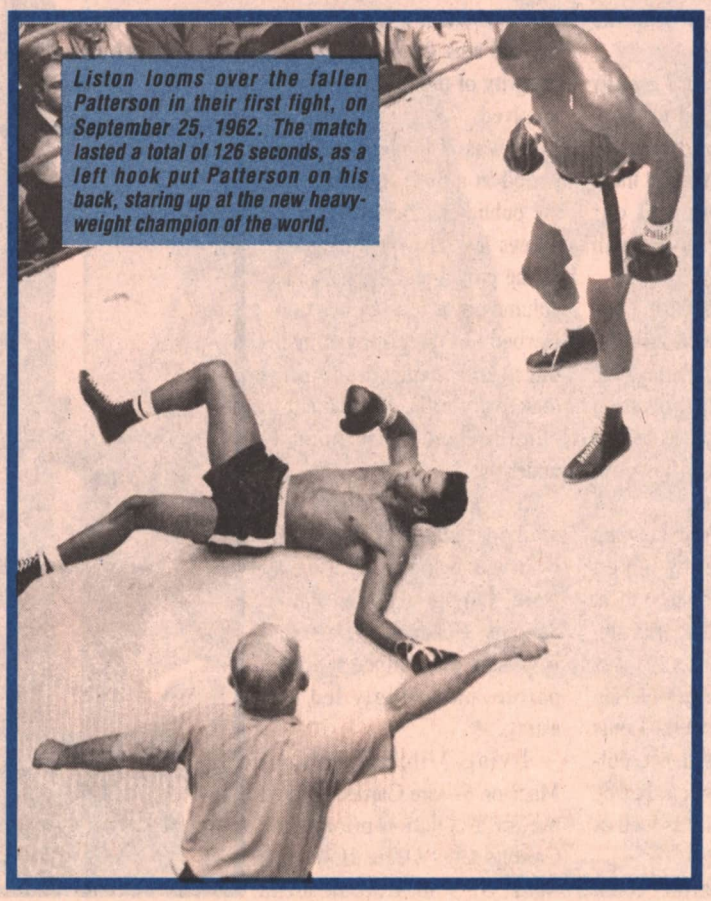
Fighting a losing battle against those who poisoned him, Liston, from his childhood days, trudged the deadly road toward the final count. Illiterate, he could not qualify for induction in the armed forces. No avid drooling sob sister or brother crossed the tracks to follow his early footsteps.

Charles Liston was born in the Arkansas back-country, May 8, 1932, in St. Francis County near Forest City, 20 miles from Little Rock. A field hand at 12. He preferred to name Little Rock as his first home.

When Liston was 13, his mother moved 12 of her children to St. Louis, leaving the father and his 13 of the family in Little Rock. For the first time, at age 13, Sonny went to school. His size, in a class of small children, set him apart and he could not endure the ridicule of the class.

In his own words in Washington, Liston said: "My mother put me in school and then, after I started going to school, other kids, you know, would see me coming out of the small kids' rooms. And I was such a large boy. They made fun of me and started laughing. I started fighting. That wasn't when I really started fighting, when I started playing hooky; and from hooky led to another thing, so I wound up in the wrong school."

While Sonny was on his first real rap, Father Stevens, a Catholic priest in the Jefferson City penitentiary, led him into professional boxing. The good Father promised Sonny, "I'll see what I can do for you on the outside," and brought Frank Mitchell to him. When Sonny beat Mitchell's boy, the manager, following the Father's instructions, got Sonny out on parole. After winning the Golden Gloves championship in 1953, Sonny turned pro with Mitchell as his pilot.



Liston looms over the fallen Patterson in their first fight, on September 25, 1962. The match lasted a total of 126 seconds, as a left hook put Patterson on his back, staring up at the new heavyweight champion of the world.

Mitchell, with 18 arrests against him, was only the first. Before long, Sonny was working for John Vitale, whose record included some 20 arrests or pick-ups, and for the late Raymond Sarkis, who was described as the president of the union, when Sonny was arrested driving Sarkis' Cadillac.

Sonny also met Frank "Blinky" Palermo, close friend of manager Pep Barone, with whom he signed a five-year contract on March 11, 1958. Sonny had never before met, or even seen, Barone. Shortly before, Sonny drove with Vitale, his friend Millie Allen, and Mitchell, to the Robinson-Fullmer fight in Chicago. Palermo did not appear in the picture for several months.

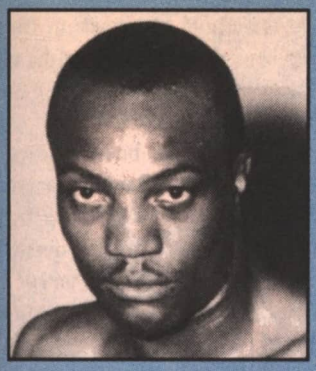
Sonny had become a highly merchandisable asset. Up to December, 1962, he had won 33 of his 34 bouts, losing a decision to Marty Marshall, whom he knocked out seven months later. But more and more Sonny was locked in with a group of associates whom he could never cast off.

He lost no other fight, until he retired after the sixth round of the championship fight with Cassius Clay in Miami Beach on February 25, 1964. When Liston failed to come out for the seventh round, Gene Tunney threw up his hands and shouted, "This is the end of professional boxing!" It didn't turn out that way.

Liston did not fight for 15 months until his return bout with Clay, which finally landed in Lewistown, Maine. It ended in the first round. A "phantom punch" and then there was Clay standing in the center of the ring calling to Liston to get up.

Coarse, vicious, brutal, ignorant, and virtually friendless, Liston suffered and fought against the short end of the stick. This was a man who fought against the world, battling against an impossible handicap. With all his history of violence, there was a moving touch of sincerity in his answer when he outpointed Senator Kefauver in the fairness of his reply to the Senator's vacuous question.

THE RING RATINGS, October 1971



Bob Foster

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Frazier, Philadelphia, PA
1. **Cassius Clay**, Cherry Hill, NJ
2. **George Foreman**, Hayward, CA
3. **Jerry Quarry**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Oscar Bonavena**, Argentina
5. **Mac Foster**, Fresno, CA
6. **Joe Bugner**, England
7. **Jimmy Ellis**, Louisville, KY
8. **Jose Luis Garcia**, Venezuela
9. **Floyd Patterson**, New York, NY
10. **George Chuvalo**, Canada

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bob Foster, Washington, D.C.
1. **Vicente Rondon**, Venezuela
2. **Jimmy Dupree**, Jersey City, NJ
3. **Conny Velensek**, Germany
4. **Andy Kendall**, Portland, OR
5. **Mike Quarry**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Gomeo Brennan**, Bahamas
7. **Hal Carroll**, Syracuse, NY
8. **Chris Finnegan**, England
9. **Bobby Cassidy**, Hempstead, NY
10. **Eddie Jones**, Los Angeles, CA

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos Monzon, Argentina
1. **Emile Griffith**, New York, NY
2. **Pierre Fourie**, South Africa
3. **Denny Moyer**, Portland, OR
4. **Carmelo Bossi**, Italy
5. **Luis Rodriguuez**, Miami Beach, FL
6. **Jean-Claude Bouttier**, France
7. **Nessim (Max) Cohen**, France
8. **Juan Carlos Duran**, Italy
9. **Bunny Sterling**, England
10. **Jose Chirino**, Argentina

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jose Napoles, Mexico
1. **Ernie Lopez**, Las Vegas, NV
2. **Marcel Cerdan Jr.**, France
3. **Adolph Pruitt**, St. Louis, MO
4. **Robert Gallois**, France
5. **Clyde Gray**, Canada
6. **Billy Backus**, Syracuse, NY
7. **Raul Soriano**, Mexico
8. **Hedgemon Lewis**, Detroit, MI
9. **Roy Barrientes**, Fort Worth, TX
10. **Sandro Lopopolo**, Italy

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
World Champ: Nicolino Locche, Argentina
1. **Bruno Arcari**, Italy
2. **Joao Henrique**, Brazil
3. **Eddie Perkins**, Chicago, IL
4. **Jimmy Robertson**, San Francisco, CA
5. **Bunny Grant**, Jamaica
6. **Ely Yares**, Philippines
7. **Johnny Gant**, Washington, D.C.
8. **Nate Robinson**, Los Angeles, CA
9. **Jeff White**, Australia
10. **Enrique Jana**, Argentina

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ken Buchanan, Scotland
1. **Pedro Carrasco**, Spain
2. **Ismael Laguna**, Panama
3. **Antonio Puddu**, Italy
4. **Shinichi Kadota**, Japan
5. **Chango Carmona**, Mexico
6. **Al Ford**, Canada
7. **Antonio Cervantes**, Colombia
8. **Eddie Linder**, Miami, FL
9. **Miguel Velazquez**, Spain
10. **Percy Hayles**, Jamaica

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alfredo Marcano, Venezuela
1. **Yoshiaka Numata**, Japan
2. **Hiroshi Kobayashi**, Japan
3. **Rene Barrientos**, Philippines
4. **Frank Otero**, Miami Beach, FL
5. **Sammy Goss**, Trenton, NJ
6. **Roberto Duran**, Panama
7. **Antonio Amaya**, Panama
8. **Jose Marin**, Costa Rica
9. **Ruben Navarro**, Los Angeles, CA
10. **Frankie Crawford**, Los Angeles, CA

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Kuniaki Shibata, Japan
1. **Shozo Saijyo**, Japan
2. **Antonio Gomez**, Venezuela
3. **Vicente Saldivar**, Mexico
4. **Eder Jofre**, Brazil
5. **Ricardo Arrendondo**, Mexico
6. **Jose Legra**, Spain
7. **Tahar Hassen**, Tunis
8. **Ernesto Marcel**, Panama
9. **Evan Armstrong**, Scotland
10. **Raul Cruz**, Mexico

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ruben Olivares, Mexico
1. **Jesus Pimentel**, Los Angeles, CA
2. **Rafael Herrera**, Mexico
3. **Chucho Castillo**, Mexico
4. **Alan Rudkin**, England
5. **Rodolfo Martinez**, Mexico
6. **Ramon Bravo**, Venezuela
7. **Franco Zurlo**, Italy
8. **Ushiwakamaru Harada**, Japan
9. **David Vasquez**, New York, NY
10. **Salvadore Lozano**, Costa Rica

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Erbito Salvarria, Philippines
1. **Masao Ohba**, Japan
2. **Lorenzo Gutierrez**, Mexico
3. **Betulio Gonzalez**, Venezuela
4. **Octavio Gomez**, Mexico
5. **Ricardo Delgado**, Mexico
6. **Venich Borkorsor**, Thailand
7. **Servillo de Oliveire**, Brazil
8. **Miguel Canto**, Mexico
9. **Orlando Amoros**, Panama
10. **Fernando Atzori**, Italy

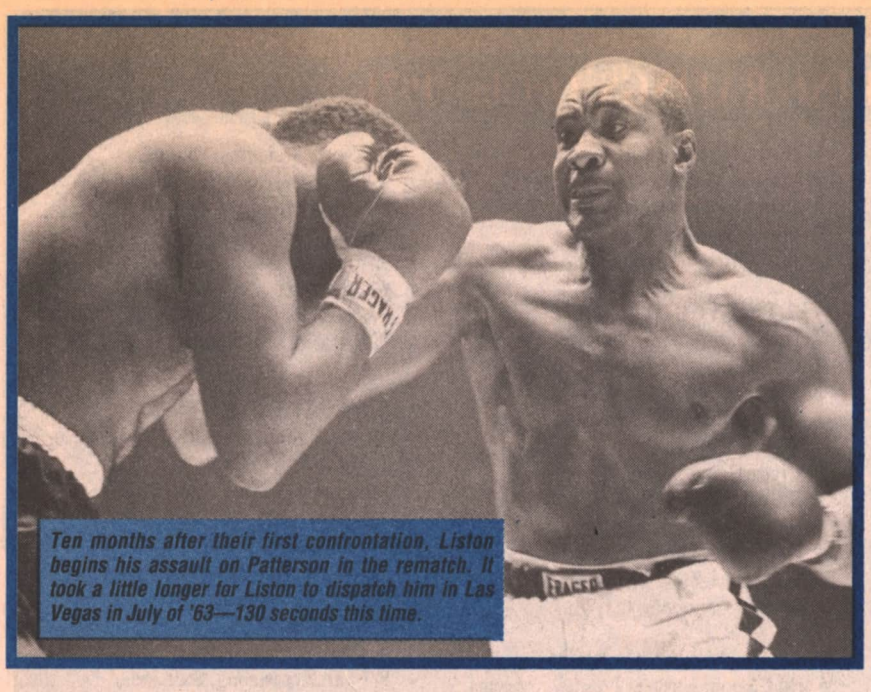
Referring to Vitale, Palermo, Mitchell, and others, the Senator said: "Do you believe people like this ought to remain in the sport of boxing, Mr. Liston?"

Liston: "Well, I couldn't pass judgment on no one. I haven't been perfect myself."

I had been introduced to Liston on several occasions, but did not get to see him closely until shortly before our Commission's decision. I was surprised, in March of 1962, to receive a telephone call from Pete Rademacher, who said he wanted to come and see me with Liston. They had an idea, he said, that looked good for boxing. They came up.

Pete, an Olympic heavyweight champion at Melbourne in 1956, had been mismatched into a bout for the world heavyweight championship and discovered his error when Floyd Patterson stopped him in Seattle in six rounds on August 22, 1957. He unfolded a weird tale that the FBI might clear Sonny, give him a clean bill of health, and he, Pete, was to be Liston's manager. I said I'd look into it. Within the hour, the FBI informed me that there was nothing to Rademacher's "clean bill of health" fantasy.

When Teddy Brenner, Madison Square Garden's matchmaker, asked me to permit Liston to be introduced before a fight in the Garden, I turned him down. To permit Sonny, in the midst of our investigation, to



Ten months after their first confrontation, Liston begins his assault on Patterson in the rematch. It took a little longer for Liston to dispatch him in Las Vegas in July of '63—130 seconds this time.

appear at the Garden would have indicated advocacy on his behalf.

The sportswriters were clamoring for a decision. Rumors flew thick and fast. Al Buck, of the *New York Post*, had a story of a trip by Julius November, Patterson's attorney, to the West Coast on an offer to hold the fight in Los Angeles, and then he shifted to New York and Yankee Stadium. Boxing reporters and columnists were sure that the Commission would yield to New York pressures, virtually demanding that the fight be held in that city.

Liston applied to us for a license on April 17, 1962, and I promised to act promptly. Some of the press believed I had discussed the matter with Governor Rockefeller and/or Louis Lefkowitz, the State Attorney General, whom several sportswriters erroneously described as my brother-in-law. I never discussed the matter with them.

On April 26, 1962, the press had the word and gathered in our offices for the story of our refusal. We dissected Liston's vitals thusly:

"On April 17, 1962, Charles Liston made application for a license as a boxer to this Commission. He has been a professional boxer since 1953 with a ring history of 34 professional contests.

"He has been licensed over the years in the states of Pennsylvania, Texas, Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, Washington, and parts of Florida. On occasion, his license has been suspended because of arrests in Missouri and (this past year) for five months in the state of Pennsylvania after two arrests to which we shall here-in after refer.

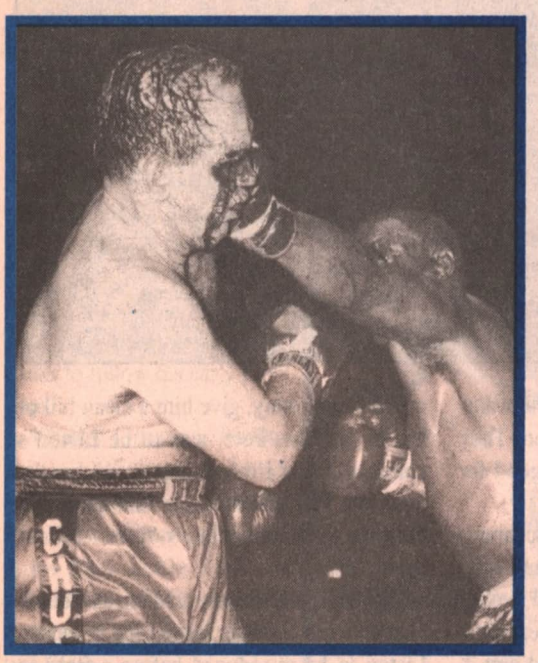
"Liston's offense record has been widely publicized and we refer to it only to indicate that his first offense, which included robbery and larceny from the person, occurred when he was 17 years of age. There are listed a number of arrests but comparatively few in number as indicated by our Department of Correction report. Two of the arrests took place in 1961, the charges being impersonation of an officer, and disorderly conduct, both of which charges were dismissed.

"A contract had been entered into between Joseph 'Pep' Barone, manager, and Sonny Liston, boxer, dated March 11, 1958, for a period of five years, but during hearings that explored the background of Sonny Liston, Barone was not able to testify because of ill health.

"Frank Palermo, John Vitale, and Frank Mitchell, all of whom have extensive arrest records, took the Fifth Amendment when questioned on all subjects, including their relationship with Sonny Liston.

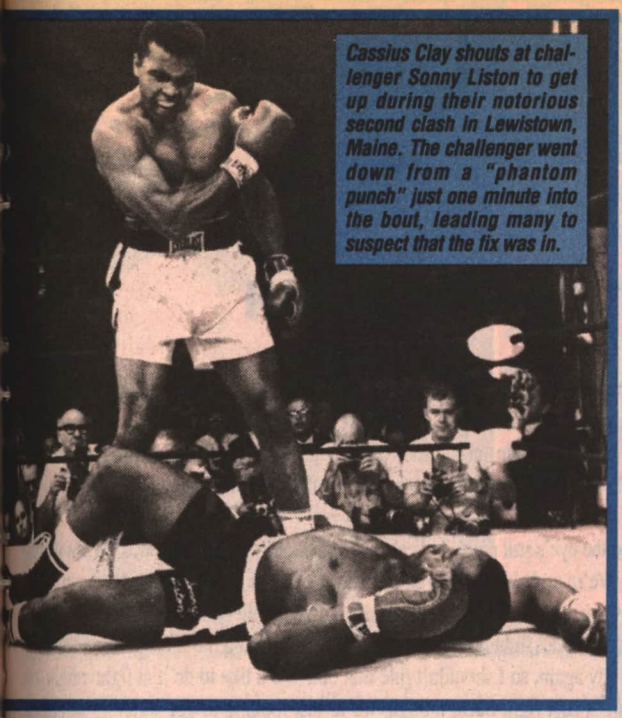
"Frank Mitchell was one of Liston's early managers; Vitale was his employer in St. Louis, and Palermo, recently sentenced to 15 years after trial in the United States District Court in California (from which an appeal was pending), was a friend.

"It was through Pep Barone, Liston's manager, that he met Blinky Palermo in 1958, and in that year the Pep Barone-Liston contract was executed. The history of the Barone-Liston contract is of interest. In 1961 it was dissolved for a consideration of $75,000 to be paid by Sonny Liston within two years to Pep Barone. A portion of these monies was paid to Barone out of the December 1961 Liston-Westphal bout, leaving a balance still due to Barone of



In Liston's last fight, he plows a left into the bloody face of Chuck Wepner on July 29, 1970. Liston was awarded the victory by 10th-round knockout, ending his stormy career.

Liston is shown here with George Katz, one of the many managers he had during his career. The two had an odd arrangement, with Liston taking in 90 percent and Katz just 10 percent.



Cassius Clay shouts at challenger Sonny Liston to get up during their notorious second clash in Lewistown, Maine. The challenger went down from a "phantom punch" just one minute into the bout, leading many to suspect that the fix was in.

some $57,000. George Katz subsequently entered into an agreement with Liston as manager, under which the division between manager and boxer was 10 percent-90 percent, a most unusual distribution. Out of the Westphal fight, Katz received some $7,500.

"In the present proceeding before this Commission, George Katz, the manager under the contract dated April 24, 1961, between Katz and Liston, does not appear either as manager or in any other capacity, although his name is mentioned.

"We address ourselves to the issue before this Commission. Liston, the number-one contender for the world heavyweight title, has proved himself an outstanding performer in the ring. Outside of the square circle, he has not been so fortunate. We do not take the position that Liston's police record alone bars him from a license in this state. We do on occasion, in the processing of rehabilitation, license applicants with records. Important figures in the boxing world have achieved distinction, despite an original unsavory background, including a police record. Since the Kefauver hearings, Liston has been twice arrested.

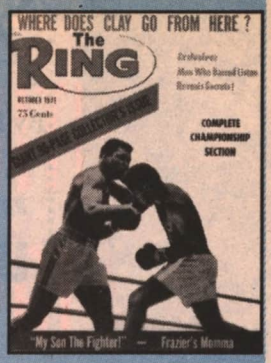
"The history of Liston's past associations provide a pattern of suspicion. His association with Vitale, Palermo, Mitchell, and others is a factor which can be detrimental to the best interests of professional boxing and to the public interest as well. We cannot ignore the possibility that these long-time associations continue to this day. The wrong people do not disengage easily. There would be more than a calculated risk in the issuance of a license on this application.

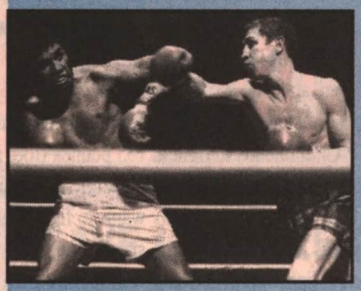
"The Commission unanimously disapproves the application and denies the license to Charles Sonny Liston."

Five months later, Sonny Liston won the world heavyweight championship in Chicago, knocking out Floyd Patterson in exactly 126 seconds. New York State recognized Liston as the world titleholder. But he still was not eligible for a New York license. ■

THE RING, October 1971

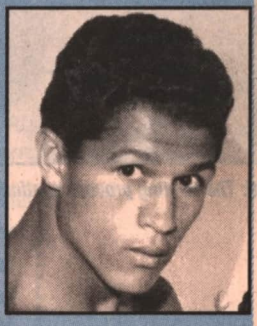
The Cover: THE RING takes a trip to Beaufort, South Carolina, the birthplace of world heavyweight champion Joe Frazier and home of Dolly Frazier, Joe's mother. Walking tall at 62, Dolly was an inspiration to her son. She raised 10 children, and Joe's devotion to his mother knew no bounds. Frazier went back home to visit his mother, looking for a good piece of land on which to build her dream house.

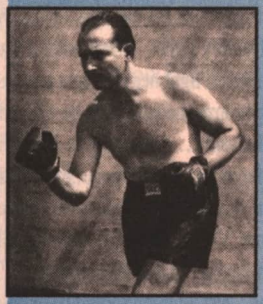




Profiling The Champs: Lightweight champion Ken Buchanan, seen en route to a win over Ruben Navarro, is included in a collection of champions portrayed in thumbnail profiles. The 26-year-old from Edinburgh, Scotland, won the lightweight crown from Ismael Laguna of Panama in a 15-round victory in September of 1970, and would reign until Roberto Duran knocked him off in '72.

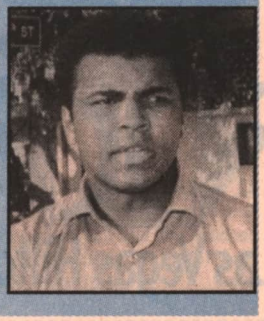
Joao To The World: THE RING looks at rising star Joao Henrique, the Brazilian junior welterweight champ. Unbeaten as an amateur lightweight, Henrique competed in the Olympic Games in Tokyo. Junior welter champ Nicolino Locche had defeated him in November of '69 on points, and Henrique would never receive another title shot.





Jewish Stars: THE RING tabs a number of Jewish fighters throughout history that have proudly represented their religion in the ring. Benny Leonard (pictured) always receives strong support as possibly the greatest Jewish champion of all-time. Others mentioned are Max Baer (who wasn't really Jewish), Jack "Kid" Berg, and Abe Attell.

Fighter of the Month: In a month in which few of boxing's champions distinguished themselves, the most important fight was Cassius Clay's clash with Jimmy Ellis. Fighting for the first time since having his perfect record ruined by Frazier, Clay posted a 12th-round stoppage over former WBA champ Ellis in Houston.



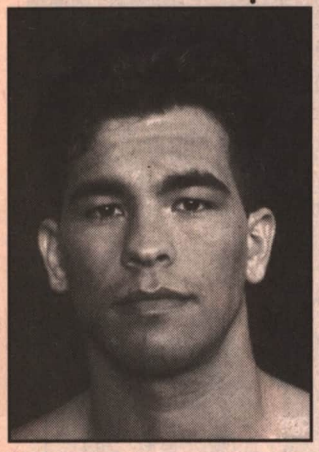
LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

"THUNDER" WON'T RUMBLE AGAIN UNTIL SUMMER

The last time we saw **Arturo "Thunder" Gatti**, he was half-blind, the left side of his face cloaked in blood, tossing his mouthpiece into the air in frustration as the referee stopped his January fight with **Angel Manfredy**. Unfortunately for Gatti fans, that image will have to linger a little while longer, as he will remain on the shelf until at least mid-summer, waiting for the cut over his left eye to properly heal. According to Gatti's manager, **Pat Lynch**, the former IBF junior lightweight champion will most likely fight again in late-July or August.

"We were at the doctor [the first week of March], and the eye's still not fully healed," Lynch said. "We knew it wasn't, but we just wanted to get an idea of when he can start training again. We're probably looking at late-May for Arturo to get back into the gym."

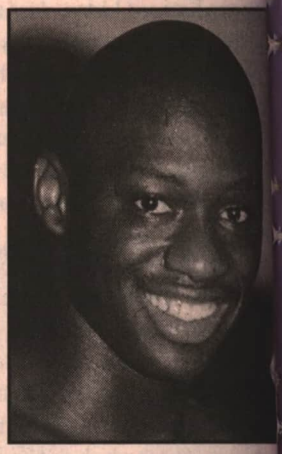


Gatti: The healing process continues

Gatti intends to fight at 135 pounds from now on, but there is a certain flashy British featherweight for whom he would go back down to 130. "If there's one more huge, lucrative fight against **Prince Naseem Hamed**, he'd drop down for that," Lynch said. "He also really wants to fight Manfredy again, so I shouldn't rule that out. We'd like to do it at lightweight, but I guess Manfredy calls the shots now. For Arturo's first fight back, though, we're just looking to get a victory under our belt at lightweight and start working toward a title shot."

LISTEN UP

A new date has been set for **Oscar De La Hoya's** mandatory defense of the WBC welterweight title against **Patrick Charpentier**. The bout was originally scheduled for February 28, then changed to March 14 when De La Hoya bruised his left wrist while sparring. But the injury persisted, and the fight is now scheduled for June 13 in El Paso, Texas. Barring further delays, this will mark "The Golden Boy's" second-longest layoff since turning pro, at just over six months. His longest was seven months-plus after his 1996 defeat of **Julio Cesar Chavez** ... The main undercard bout in support of De La Hoya-Charpentier will be unbeaten WBC lightweight champ **Stevie Johnston's** mandatory defense against Mexican **Cesar Bazan** ... The **Pernell Whitaker-Ike Quartey** WBA welterweight title fight set for April 25 was postponed when Whitaker entered rehab in March after a second positive drug test. With the WBA's rule that a boxer who fails a drug test may not fight for a title for two years, it appeared that the fight had been canceled for good. But **Donald Tremblay** of Whitaker's promotional company, **Main Events**, implied the WBA's mandate may be flexible. "I think the fact that Whitaker has entered rehab should help him [in the eyes of the WBA]," Tremblay said. "We still want to make the Whitaker-Quartey fight" ... Promoter **J Russell Peltz** has until December to decide whether to re-sign unbeaten light heavyweight prospect **Antonio Tarver**, and it's no sure thing that the '96 Olympic bronze medalist will be offered a new contract. "He has to start looking better," Peltz said ... According to Main Events promoter **Dino Duva**, negotiations began in March for '96 Olympian **Fernando Vargas** to take a tremendous step up in competition this summer against two-division former champion **Hector Camacho**. At press time, Vargas was 10-0, winning all 10 fights by knockout, but Camacho has never been kayoed in his 69-bout career. Though it figures to be tough to keep his knockout streak alive against "The Macho Man," just winning should be enough to push the 20-year-old welterweight into title contention.



Tarver: Needs to earn a new contract

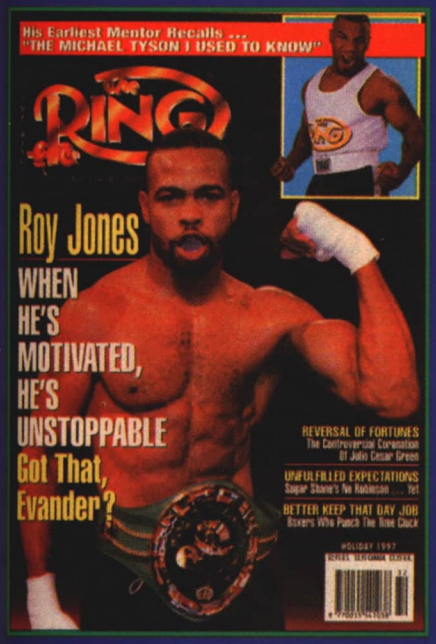
FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Bernard Hopkins	Felix Trinidad	3-2	Hopkins a little too strong
Johnny Tapia	Mark Johnson	Pick-'em	Too close to call
Fernando Vargas	Hector Camacho	2½-1	One last payday for Camacho
Junior Jones	Kennedy McKinney	7-5	Either man can win rematch

Las Vegas Hilton



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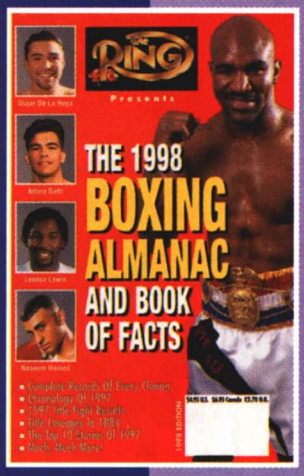

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